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A FORCE OF NATURE: THE MATERNAL APPETITE OF GOOD AND EVIL WOMEN IN “SNOW WHITE,” “HANSEL AND GRETEL” AND “RAPUNZEL”

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A FORCE OF NATURE: THE MATERNAL APPETITE OF GOOD AND EVIL WOMEN IN "SNOW WHITE," "HANSEL AND GRETEL" AND "RAPUNZEL"

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ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses representations of women, appetite, and food in well-known literary fairy tales and contemporary feminist works. Tales popular in North America consistently link female identity to Mother Nature by way of forbidden food and transgressive appetites, which are the prime means of establishing women's good or evil status. The good/evil binary between heroines and witches appears representative of Jungian psychology's Great Mother archetype; however, this binary understanding is founded on myths of motherhood and the fear of female power and sexuality. Analyzing the Grimms' classic "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Rapunzel" versions, as well as feminist revisions, I critique the supposed timelessness and universality of woman as nature—as either nurturing or castrating—as a changing, ideological concept. Through monstrous characters and plot revisions, feminists challenge the classics' gender assumptions, but in providing their critiques, they also rely on the classics' mothering and sexuality myths.

Keywords: Grimms' fairy tales, feminist fairy tales, literary criticism, Jungian archetypes, motherhood, food, myth, monstrous-feminine, the abject, postmodernism.

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Introduction

Full of well-known images of good and evil, magic, romance, and courage, folk and fairy tales have entertained and enlightened diverse audiences for centuries. Adapted from the oral storytelling tradition, literary fairy tales are not only critiqued by scholars for their gender stereotypes and didactic purposes, but also for their ideological quality. For instance, as discussed by fairy tale scholar Jack Zipes, the literary fairy tale genre that emerged at the end of the seventeenth century ("Breaking" 5) involved the appropriation and revision of the lower classes' oral and anonymous stories. The tales were revised according to the authors' inherent class interests and for their intended audiences. In the case of French author Charles Perrault, the folktale-turned-fairy tale served the purpose of socializing children, indoctrinating them with bourgeois notions of *civilité* (Zipes, "Trials" 28). On the other hand, the Grimms' fairy tales were an attempt to "reconstitute the old German tradition in its 'pure' form" (Zipes, "Brothers" 12), as the Grimms were collecting German folk tales in hopes of unifying their divided nation (Zipes, "Brothers" 7). As Zipes' socio-historical accounts illustrate, the literary fairy tale is subject to authors' inherent biases, which have caused numerous adaptations to characters and story plots over time. Therefore, the symbolic content of fairy tales parallels their socio-historical production, influenced by the ideas of authors and audiences at a particular historical moment. For feminists, Marxists, and psychoanalysts of various orientations, the fairy tale genre offers a wealth of material from which to draw critiques of the literature's aesthetic qualities and representations, the possible effects on readers, and their means of production.

Literary stories such as "Snow White," "The Little Mermaid," "Cinderella," and "Sleeping Beauty," no doubt helped by the popularity of their Disney-animated versions, are so familiar and well-known to children and adults that they appear "natural...as if they had always

been with us" (Zipes, "Fairy" 5). Standing in for the richly diverse genre, these well-known texts' conventions and patterns are accepted as the fairy tale norm, instead of being recognized as mythic and falsely natural or highly constructed. Though scholars have uncovered tales penned by French female authors—"*conteuses*"—in the 1690s (Harries 4), scholars must recognize that classic fairy tales are increasingly relevant for critique because of their widespread popularity. As Marcia R. Lieberman states in "Some Day my Prince Will Come: Female Acculturation through the Fairy Tale," relatively unknown stories by women "cannot seriously be considered in a study of the meaning of fairy tales to women" (186), as they have not played as large a role in socializing children as the well-known tales have.[1]

My thesis project analyzes the classic versions of "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Rapunzel" penned by the Grimms, in addition to contemporary and lesser-known editions of the same stories. Although Lieberman emphasizes that popular fairy tales hold more weight with popular audiences than the more obscure versions, my exploration requires a tracing of these literary stories over time in order to critique the notion that a universal female nature is inherently expressed in the fairy tale form. By exploring the treatment of womanhood and eating in multiple texts, it is my intention to show that female identity is not symbolically linked to the fertile and chaotic properties of the Earth, as some Jungian analyses suggest. Instead, the diverse texts chosen for this project speak for themselves—as creative and political expressions of their authors, varying the depictions of female characters and their relationships with food and eating. For multiple reasons, fairy tales are important texts to interrogate within the media studies field. Firstly, fairy tales have been widely popularized by the Disney Corporation, disseminating

[1] Lieberman's statement is in response to Alison Lurie's assertion that amongst classic fairy tale stories, there are empowering feminist tales that "suggest a society in which women are as competent and active as men" (42). In contrast, Lieberman argues that these stories are not popular, and therefore do not have as large an influence as the classics, which acculturate children into problematic gender roles (185).

certain worldviews at a global level. Disney draws on the stories penned by European fairy tale collectors such as the Grimm brothers, and although they were published two centuries ago, these tales are the basis for popular cultural products often critiqued in media studies circles today. Disney works are also widely critiqued within film studies and women's studies, but my intention is to focus on classic literary versions because their plotlines, images, and patterns are so pervasive and naturalized in other media forms and daily experiences. The Grimms' literature, published in multiple editions of their *Children's and Household Tales (Kinder-und Hausmärchen)*, are texts of the past, but they inform the present and future in a multitude of ways—through fairy tale duplications and playful revisions. Fairy tale characters and plotlines are seen in other media texts, such as advertising, films, and even pornography. The genre has also been critiqued as ordering everyday life, influencing familial and romantic relationships, acculturating children into oppressive sex roles (Lieberman 185), and ordering news story narratives according to the classics' binaries and morals (Fullerton, "Representing"). Often a form of popular, 'innocent' entertainment, fairy tale texts influence our greater understanding of the world and peoples' identities. The recurring representations of certain fairy tale patterns are perhaps indicative of how they "draw on and help constitute our inner, private lives: our fantasies, emotions and identities" (Hesmondhalgh 3).

In *The Cultural Industries*, David Hesmondhalgh discusses the cultural studies wing of media studies, which I feel is representative of this project's objectives and methodology. My focus on fairy tales relates to cultural studies' general interest in interrogating "ordinary, everyday culture," and that this culture "needs to be taken seriously" (39). Fairy tale texts are not usually considered 'high culture,' but their popularity and veneer of timelessness make these narratives highly relevant media to critique if one considers how these stories relate to cultural

power. The tales well-known in the West projects a certain vision of the world according to gender, class, and moral lines. Ultimately, my cultural studies orientation questions whose voices are heard and whose are marginalized (Hesmondhalgh 40), and how the fairy tale form may act as a vehicle for subverting this marginalization of women in particular, perhaps expanding discourses about gender and sexuality. In his discussion of 'culture,' Raymond Williams defines the term as a "*signifying system* through which…a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored" ("Culture" 13). As mediated texts, subject to revision, appropriation, and interpretation, fairy tales are a part of culture—signifying a changing social order.

Overall, fairy tales *matter* because they perpetuate mythic ideas that are widely accepted by a variety of publics at face value. At the same time, the fairy tale's fantastic nature offers a site of contestation, as authors may 'kidnap' this mythic imagery and use it against the problematic classics.

I focus on certain tales that are well-known and which display food and appetite prominently—"Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Rapunzel." I argue that they also often link womanhood to appetite and nourishment, drawing on mothering myths and the female body's ability to bear children. The versions I deem classic—the Grimms' tales published in the 1857 version of *Children's and Household Tales*[2]--show good female characters desiring forbidden food and evil women using fare as deadly weapons. On the other hand, the earlier Grimms' versions and later contemporary tales conflate the good/evil mother binary and alter women's association with nature. At the heart of the matter, my objective is to interrogate how female identity is represented through inanimate objects of nature, and will also consider how the

[2] The Grimm brothers published seven editions of *Children's and Household Tales* in total; however, their final edition is the most widely known today (Zipes, "Art" 48). Throughout this thesis, I also refer to their earlier editions and their first manuscript drawn together in 1810—the Ölenberg manuscript (Zipes, "Brothers" xii)—to discuss the structural changes made to the tales over time.

connotative meanings of the classics provide a narrow definition of motherhood and female sexuality. In addition, I question how contemporary revisionist texts by authors such as Emma Donoghue and Angela Carter portray maternal practice and sexuality differently than in the Grimms' stories, perhaps providing an expanded discussion about what womanhood means and signifies.

My first chapter discusses how otherwise good mothers and female characters succumb to their desire for forbidden food and lose their prized position as caregivers. For instance, one may suggest that Snow White's temporary death caused by the poisonous apple allows her to relinquish her housekeeping duties (Grimm 62), upsetting a supposedly natural gender role. Or, in the Grimms' "Rapunzel," the mother irrationally craves and consumes the forbidden rapunzel plant, which causes her to lose her daughter to the witch. In both cases, the products of nature—food–prove too much for good female characters, who must pay the consequences by forfeiting their roles as mothers and caregivers.

I first delve into the representations of the good yet hungry mother with a psychoanalytic interpretation of the classic texts—the Grimm versions of "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Rapunzel." The Great Mother archetype, a Jungian theoretical concept, relates to the female protagonists, villains, and their relationships with the natural world. Female characters, natural environments, and food are signs that I interpret. As a starting point, this Jungian analysis of the traditional versions will make visible the problematic naturalization of feminine identity as universally Earth-bound—as reproductive and potentially threatening.

Chapter one moves into a socio-historically based exploration of the texts in order to critique the notion that an ultimate archetypal mother image exists in all fairy stories, operating to sublimate readers' unconscious hopes and fears. By turning to other versions of the three

primary texts, I consider what relationship good female characters have with food, and whether these depictions play into or subvert the mother archetype in certain ways. For instance, I question whether alternative editions depict food, good mothering, and sexuality differently, perhaps reconfiguring fairy tale and gendered discourse. A fundamental question I ask is whether "nature as woman" continues to be presented in a mythic duality—as both essential and destructive.

Chapter two focuses on female villains' depictions in relation to food and eating. Most explicitly, all three classic stories show witches' and stepmothers' inner evil being revealed through food imagery—either by using food as a trap or desiring human flesh. For instance, the evil queen in "Snow White" shows her terrible nature through the means of food and eating, as she wants to consume the girl's flesh and uses a poisoned apple as a deadly lure. Through a semiotic analysis of the three fairy tale classics, I explore how femininity and nature are perceived as chaotic and uncontrollable, both providing the potential power to nourish and also destroy child and adult characters. I discuss how these visions of "women with teeth" relate to the archetype of the terrible mother, as outlined by Jungian theorists. I also refer to Joseph Campbell's *The Masks of God* to discuss the myth of the *vagina dentate*, which from a feminist standpoint, is symbolically representative of the male fear of unbridled and excessive female sexuality and power.

To further contextualize the terrible mother in the well-known versions, I consider fairy tales' intertextuality, their relation to historical events, and the authors' revision processes. Closely related to Zipes' method of historicizing texts, I consider the material conditions "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Rapunzel" represent. For instance, the witch hunts and the mistrust in stepmothers are issues that must be explored in greater detail, using Diane Purkiss'

text, *The Witch in History*, as well as the works of Shari Thurer and Adrienne Rich in discussing how good mothering is institutional rather than eternal or universal.

Then, I compare the classic texts to different versions and I highlight how the symbolism surrounding female villainy has changed over time, reflecting the political motivations and biases of the authors and audience. This part of the chapter discusses how the female monster, abject characters, and techniques of defamiliarization subvert the classics' representations, and how female characters are figured in relation to mothering, food, and appetite.

Defining Important Terms

"Folk Tale"

Folk tale refers to oral stories that do not have specific authors (de Vos and Altmann 8). In German, folk tales were commonly called *Volksmärchen*, a term that indicates the common peoples' role in creating and carrying the tales (Zipes, "Breaking" 23). As storytellers and audiences, the collective actively participated in the meaning-making process by suggesting alternative plotlines (Zipes, "Breaking" 5). In *Breaking the Magic Spell*, Zipes discusses the hopeful, escapist, and utopian character (xi) of the folk tale, as their communal creators were often of the lower class and used the narrative form to express their hardships and wishes at a particular historical moment (4, 28). As the predecessor of literary fairy tales (Fullerton, "Sexing" 39), folk tales emerged from social conditions that differed greatly from the interests and concerns of the bourgeois authors that later adapted them for literary production in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries throughout Europe (Zipes, "Breaking" 23). The folk tradition can be interpreted as subversive, as their fantastical patterns and motifs were symbolic of the realities of class struggle and rebellion (Zipes, "Breaking" 24), whereas magical elements indicated the folk peoples' desire to improve living conditions and decrease social injustices (28,

30). Zipes also points out that folk tales predominantly represent a "might makes right" ethos, as the stories indicate the "power politics" of the time ("Breaking" 29) and the possibility of inverting class hierarchy with characters who accomplish amazing feats, such as rising from rags to riches or usurping a member of the aristocratic class. Supernatural forces serve a special purpose in folk tales—to intervene in class struggle and enable social change (29).

"Fairy Tale"

"Fairy tale" refers to published and revised stories that originated from oral and anonymous folk tales. Fairy tale emerges from the French *contes de fées*, a term that was first included in the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1750, likely influenced by the name of Countess D'Aulnoy's 1698 anthology, *Contes de Fées* (Zipes, "Breaking" 23). Aristocratic and bourgeois authors such as Basile, Countess D'Aulnoy, Perrault, and the Brothers Grimm adapted and revised folk tales according to their class' interests. For instance, Perrault's revisions were largely motivated by his position in the French court and the bourgeois class' value system. Prescribing to their class' strict notions of *civilité* (Zipes, "Trials" 28), rationalism and utilitarianism (Zipes, "Breaking" 24), bourgeois authors felt the folk tale must be purged of its questionable "low culture" elements before being consumed by "high culture" audiences (24). Therefore, the transition from oral folk tale to published fairy tale is rife with class struggle, as the emerging bourgeois class sought to use the fairy tale genre as "literary socialization" (Zipes, "Trials" 29) to strengthen their power. Zipes also mentions that the adaptation of folk tales into literary fairy tales was a politically-minded appropriation of folk culture, as "...the most industrious, virtuous, and profitable components of the lower classes [were used] to strengthen the economic and cultural power of the bourgeoisie" ("Trials" 29). The term "fairy tale" thus

triggers a discussion about processes of revision as increasing or decreasing power for certain social groups.

Fairy tales can be further defined by their patterns, motifs, and characters. Although some scholars believe "wonder tale" (Zipes, "When Dreams" 5) is a more appropriate term to use because many of these stories do not include fairies (de Vos and Altmann 8), I will use fairy tale in this thesis because the phrase is widely known and used by the general public. I stand beside J.R.R. Tolkien in this regard as he suggests that the term *should* be interpreted through the word "faerie," despite the genre's lack of fairy characters. In *Tree and Leaf*, he defines the fairy tale as belonging to "the realm or state in which fairies have their being. Faerie contains many things besides elves and gays, and besides dwarfs, witches, trolls, giants or dragons: it holds…ourselves, mortal men, when we are enchanted" (14). The literary fairy tale is therefore closely related to the fantasy genre, with its supernatural actors and moments of transformation and magic. As discussed by Romayne Chaloner Smith Fullerton in *Sexing the Fairy Tale: Borrowed Monsters - Postmodern Fantasies*, fairy tales' fantastical elements inject disorder into the text and offer an alternative vision of social reality (34). Similarly, Richter and Merkel's study, cited in Zipes' *Breaking the Magic Spell*, contends that fantasy motifs serve as a means for initiating positive change for protagonists (28). Despite the revision process and "bourgeoisification" of folk stories (Zipes, "Breaking" 29), fairy tales' fantastical motifs remain, potentially providing a subversive, alternative way of viewing the world.

"Classic Fairy Tale"

A further distinction must be made between the broader term—fairy tale—and the more specific classic texts I will be using as the basis of my critique. In one vein, the classic fairy tale may be defined as stories that North American audiences most commonly envisage when they

think "fairy tale" (Zipes, "Myth" 5). For example, I consider the Grimms' "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Rapunzel" stories published in *Children's and Household Tales* as classic texts to analyze and critique. I also consider the classics as presenting a problematic, stereotypical depiction of women. As discussed by Marcia Lieberman, the widely read classic fairy tale acculturates children into traditional and harmful gender roles (185). For instance, these stories abound with beautiful protagonists who receive miracles after a period of suffering in silence. Readers learn that beauty, selflessness, and passivity (Lieberman 186) define morally good femininity, as these characters are consistently rewarded for being pretty and docile in the classic texts. Presented in a polar opposition, powerful women in classic fairy tales are relegated as other figures—as ogres, witches, and stepmothers who must be punished for their activity (Lieberman 187) and inherent ugliness. As I will later discuss, the classic texts also problematically associate femininity with the Earth, presenting womanhood as good—nourishing—and evil—potentially destructive and castrating.

"Contemporary Fairy Tale"

In general, contemporary fairy tales refer to stories published in the twentieth or twenty-first centuries. In addition, the revisionist, contemporary stories I have chosen will also be classified as contemporary feminist tales, as they use well-known fairy tale motifs to make gender inequalities visible within the texts and beyond. These texts rely on audiences' prior knowledge of the classic stories' plots and characters to reveal how naturalised concepts are false constructions (Fullerton, "Sexing" 20) that can and should be replaced with alternative visions of femininity. As Zipes discusses in *Fairy Tale as Myth/Myth as Fairy Tale*, there is a distinct difference between stories that duplicate the classics and ones that revise. The latter interprets the classic tales as being flawed in certain ways and re-examines them to change values and

meanings for a specific purpose, whereas duplication simply maintains its predecessors' themes (Zipes, "Myth" 8-10). A revised tale also adheres to the same credo as those espoused by feminists, because revisionists attempt to "...alter the reader's views of traditional patterns, images, and codes" (Zipes, "Myth" 9), while feminists offer liberating strategies (Tong 1) through the fairy tale form. In sum, the texts I refer to as contemporary are feminist revisions.

"Myth" and "Ideology"

Myth will be defined according to semiological theory, as described by Roland Barthes in *Mythologies*. Although myth is sometimes used to refer to a story or tale, using this generalized meaning will likely confuse myth and fairy tale as interchangeable terms, when the two have different meanings. As Barthes discusses, myth is a part of the second-order semiological system (114) that draws on the literal meanings of denotative signs and fills them with seemingly natural referents. As a form of speech (Barthes 109) that involves a confusion of nature with history (11), mythic interpretations appear commonsensical, universal, and eternal, when in actuality, certain socio-historical forces shape meanings and offer certain motivations. Barthes refers to myth's "going-without-saying" quality as causing "ideological abuse" (11) because they are ideas that masquerade as natural and universal in order to increase power for a dominant group.

According to Marxist terminology, ideology refers to the superstructure that is formed out of the economic base of society (Marx 37). As the generative mechanism for ideology, the economic base creates ideas that reproduce and strengthen class relations and divisions that will essentially reinforce economic material conditions and the dominance of one social group over another. For instance, Raymond Williams refers to ideology as: "a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class" ("Ideology" 55). Also, Marx and Engels further describe the term as "the ideas of the ruling class are every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the

ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force" (39). Since ideology is about the maintenance of power economically and socially through the dissemination of class-related ideas, the fairy tale genre, like any form of media, is inherently linked to ideology. As Zipes discusses in many of his historically-oriented analyses of folk and fairy tales, the classic texts produced by editor-authors Charles Perrault and the Grimms' can be said to be acts of ideological warfare, as the bourgeois class sought to dominate the folk by way of the literary fairy tale's myths.

Jack Zipes applies Barthes' definition of myth to classic fairy tales, arguing that this group of stories involves a "mythicization" process ("Myth" 5) that attempts to make itself into a canonized genre that is believed to be exempt from being critiqued. He also maintains that the fairy tale as myth has become purposely "dehistoricized [and] depoliticized to represent and maintain the hegemonic interests of the bourgeoisie" ("Myth" 6). The classic fairy tale texts used in this thesis—"Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Rapunzel"—are myths because they appear timeless and thus "off grounds" for critique and revision (Zipes, "Myth" 19). In addition, the Brothers Grimms' lengthy editing process is also obscured from view, along with considerations of why they altered characters and plotlines. As myth, the classic fairy tale texts referred to in my thesis deny their socio-historical roots in order to support a certain worldview.

In general, myths also lend stability and order to a complex and chaotic world. The seemingly natural ideas they present are condensed and made simpler through their obscuring of socio-historical factors.

"Good Mothering"

When used in my thesis, this phrase implies my scepticism that good maternal practice can be defined or achieved because the concept of acceptable mothering is a myth that attempts

to control women's behaviours and maternal labour. For instance, women's biological capacity to bear children is often conflated with the cultural belief that mothers are the best caregivers (Tong 181), though 'mothering' can be conducted by either sex. Further, in *Of Woman Born*, Adrienne Rich critiques the conflation of maternal practice with the institution of motherhood (174), which places narrow definitions on who can mother and what mothering entails. The institution defines good mothers as female, heterosexual, domestic, and self-sacrificial (Tong 183). Shari Thurer's socio-historical account of mothering through the ages in *The Myths of Motherhood* also maintains that the contemporary Western concept of good maternal practice is still based on the image of the Victorian mother—a construct that idealizes women who stay at home, and never voice their needs or desires, and men who are the breadwinners (185). The good mother definition also places limitations on mothers' sexuality, which alienates women from their own bodies, their desires, and those of their children (Rich 182-184). As a result, mothers are desexualized and confined to receiving pleasure through heterosexual intercourse, which retains male dominance and power (Rich 183). The martyr-like "angel in the house" who endures pain in silence is perceived as a good mother (Rich 168), while her sexual desires should be sublimated to her caregiving. Rich also notes the consequences of not adhering to good mothering myths: a mother who does not suffer or desexualize herself is considered dangerous (169), inappropriate and grotesque (183). Similarly, the stepmothers and female ogres of the fairy tale are often defined as evil through their denial of maternal practices and their excessive and inappropriate self-indulgences.

The good mother concept is therefore problematic in its assumptions about womanhood and the limitations it places on maternal actions and sexuality. Good mothering presents a narrow definition of how to mother well, though caregiving can be conducted in a multitude of

ways. Cited in Rosemarie Tong's *Feminist Thought*, Sara Ruddick's analysis of maternal practice indicates that in general, mothering involves the "preservation, growth, and social acceptability of children" (182); however, the myths of motherhood oppress women through the pervasive, narrow definition of good mothering. In effect, this constricted definition presents maternity and child rearing as definable and attainable, bringing order to an otherwise obscure concept—which is the function of myth. Though mothering myths can be said to reduce mothers' anxiety with the supposedly attainable goal of becoming a good mother, the meanings associated with virtuous mothering repress her desires.

"Jungian Psychoanalytic Analysis"

For the purposes of this study, psychoanalytic theory is used in order to critique the notion that all fairy tales abound with unwavering and universal archetypes of the human psyche. Bettelheim's text, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, argues that fairy tales serve an important socializing function and allow child readers to sublimate the anxieties and desires of their id drives. Bettelheim also psychoanalyzes "Hansel and Gretel," and interprets the tale as being one of separation and hunger anxiety, as well as the unmet "oral demands" of children, as the mother is the primary source of food (159).

While Bettelheim's psychoanalytic elaborations utilize Freudian theory, Marie-Louise von Franz and Sybille Birkhauser-Oeri analyze fairy tales according to the Jungian psychoanalytic theory of the collective unconscious and its archetypes. Though von Franz is an avid supporter of Jungian analysis of fairy tale texts, the majority of her work focuses on in-depth readings of stories that will not be addressed in this research project. However, her outlook on archetypes and the collective unconscious will be used to highlight this field's research perspective. She states in *Interpretation of Fairy Tales* that these literary stories are "the purest

and simplest expression of the collective unconscious" and this simplicity allows the researcher to investigate their archetypal images and patterns, which mirror the universal human psyche (von Franz 1). Unlike legends and myths, fairy tales have less "cultural conscious material" (11) –its characters and plots are apparently not consciously influenced by mythic national sentiments or history (18).

Similarly, in Birkhauser-Oeri's *The Mother: Archetypal Image in Fairy Tales,* she sees fairy tales as "emerging spontaneously," thus representing the unconscious' universal desires and offering potential solutions to humanity's problems (9) once brought into conscious thought (10). She offers a straight-forward summary of the Jungian concept of the mother archetype, as well as archetypal readings of "Snow White" and "Rapunzel." For my thesis project, the mother archetype projected in classic fairy tales thus becomes "naturally" symbolically linked to food imagery—whether they are the providers of nourishment or they enact the dark side of the mother archetype that devours or poisons her children. Birkhauser-Oeri echoes other scholars' observation that women in fairy tales are often wicked stepmothers, witches, or helpful fairies, who are usually depicted as harnessing the powers of nature and animals (17). Terrible mothers have an "abnormal" relationship with food—eating human flesh and using food as a lure or invisible poison (27, 37). Although she recognizes this pattern, she maintains that these depictions of the mother archetype in fairy tales are "relatively unaffected by the patriarchal tendencies of our culture" (18), and that these mythic images only embody unconscious thoughts and desires of the psyche.

"Socio-Historical Analysis"

I also draw on what I refer to as socio-historical modes of analysis in order to critique classic fairy tales and Jungian readings of fairy tales as myths. In particular, I find Jack Zipes'

method of historicizing fairy tales highly useful for making obscured editing processes and meanings visible. Contrary to the psychoanalytic perspective, Zipes critiques the notion that the collective unconscious and its archetypes are naturally represented in fairy tales. Instead, he states that there are specific socio-historical forces, undeniably related to authors' and audience's ideologies that influence the stories' characters and plot makeup. For instance, he states in *Fairy Tale as Myth, Myth as Fairy Tale* that ascribing fairy tales the universality of the collective unconscious strengthens the mythic quality of these stories, aiding in their canonization (1994, 19). Overall, I apply Zipes' technique of comparing literature and their authors' historical circumstances in order to critique psychoanalysts' belief that fairy tales represent the collective unconscious, when the shifting meanings of "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Rapunzel" over time suggest otherwise.

Chapter I

The Apple of Mother's Eye

This chapter offers analyses of the fairy tale mother by drawing on perspectives from the fields of psychoanalysis, feminism, and history to explore how motherhood, food, and nature are symbolically linked. In order to bring attention to the myths of femininity projected in these stories, I first interpret the classic versions of "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Rapunzel" as possible expressions of the collective unconscious. Although Jungian "archetypal criticism" (Walker 144) may offer an enriched interpretation of these stories, to me, a psychoanalytic framework is problematic because it interprets the mothers and women of the fairy tale as having a universal feminine nature. Therefore, reading these tales first through a Jungian lens later calls attention to how mothering is an institution and not an eternal or natural practice. At this point in the chapter I refer to feminist and socio-historical arguments that indicate how good and poor mothering are changing and ideological concepts. Lastly, the chapter concludes with a discussion of female figures in alternative versions, comparing the treatment of mothering and food to their classic predecessors. At the core, interrogating these stories through a variety of perspectives critiques the supposed naturalness of food as woman—maternal, alluring, and chaotic.

The Great Mother: Archetype, Image, Myth

As goddess figure and archetype, the Great Mother provides an image of femininity that is both wondrous and terrifying—her capacity to create and destroy life (Thurer 10) is indicative of her power to shape nature. Symbolically, she represents the Earth or garden, a site of birth and renewal that remains potentially uncontrollable and threatening. This good and terrible mother

binary is a common feature throughout the "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Rapunzel" stories that I discuss, particularly the classic texts.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, the Great Mother archetype is defined by Carl Jung in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* as "...all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility," but is also representative of "anything that devours, seduces, and poisons" ("Collected" 82). Similarly, Shari Thurer's account of motherhood through the ages in *The Myths of Motherhood* describes the Mother goddess as not all-loving and sacrificial, as the contemporary good mother stereotype now signifies, but as a sensual and life-giving mother who has a chaotic dark side, symbolic of the circle of life - death, decay, and rebirth (10).

In this chapter, I discuss how the Great Mother binary is expressed in the classic fairy tale texts, which stress the importance of good femininity and motherhood through the juxtaposition of evil women and easily-tempted yet good mother figures. From a Jungian perspective, both the good and depraved women seen in the classic "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel" and "Rapunzel" are visions of the Great Mother, symbolically representing nature through magical food, entrapment, and eating. While Jungian psychoanalysts suggest that the Mother archetype is a biologically-inherited image imprinted on humanity's collective unconscious (Walker 10), I suggest that the type of femininity shown in fairy tales is subject to ever-changing social and historical circumstances. At times, motherhood is presented mythically and thus becomes oppressive because of its narrow definition of what a good mother is. For instance, the traditional "Rapunzel" text suggests that mother figures who give into their food temptations must be punished and stripped of their parenting role, which, in turn suggests that good mothering is defined by a mother's degree of selflessness and control of her bodily urges. However, contemporary authors such as Angela Carter, Neil Gaiman, and Emma Donoghue have worked

to expand the discourse of femininity through their revisionist fairy tales which, I will suggest, question the mystique surrounding the supposedly *a priori* understanding of the Great Mother archetype.

According to Jungian psychoanalyst Marie-Louise von Franz, fairy tales are "the purest and simplest expression of the collective unconscious," allowing the researcher to pinpoint archetypal motifs that mirror the human psyche (1). In particular, these scholars reductively assume that fairy tales are immaterial and static, representing the psyche's archetypes in some form. However, Steven Walker's summary of Jung's theory of mythology in *Jung and the Jungians on Myth* critiques this notion that all fairy tales mirror the hidden desires of the collective unconscious and its archetypes (Walker 113). Reviewing Jungian theoretical terminology, Walker clarifies that the myths generated from the collective unconscious' archetypes are influenced by social circumstances: "Since the *archetypal image* as *archetypal motif* becomes represented in a *myth* in the terms of a particular culture and of a particular moment in history, it is improper to consider a myth as ageless or as universal as an archetype" (19). Repetitious archetypal motifs generate broader myths, such as the myth of good and evil. Fairy tales therefore represent and perpetuate culturally influenced *myths* rather than static and instinctual archetypes.

In contrast, von Franz and Birkhauser-Oeri use Jungian concepts to emphasize the supposedly static meanings of fairy stories, treating the tales as archetypal rather than mythic, "culturally elaborated" (Walker 4), and therefore changeable. For instance, both von Franz and Birkhauser-Oeri focus on *classic* fairy tale versions when they claim that "all fairy tales endeavour to describe one and the same psychic fact...what Jung calls the Self" (von Franz 1-2). Walker critiques von Franz's assertion as reductive, assuming that fairy tales represent "a single

universal religious outlook or monomyth" (114) that can be traced back to the all-encompassing archetype of the Self. Similarly, in *Fairy Tale as Myth, Myth as Fairy Tale*, Jack Zipes critiques Jungian theories of the collective unconscious as "overlooking the specificity of real types of human beings, blurr[ing] the dynamic interaction between sociogenetic and psychogenetic forces in the civilizing process" (117). In short, some Jungian analyses of fairy tales do not account for the changes authors have made to old stories, for obvious political reasons that are grounded in material reality. Adhering to the terms and theories of the Jungian school of thought (Zipes, "Breaking" 21) can cause analysts to limit their findings to fit the field's framework.

According to psychoanalytic theory, the collective unconscious is a psychic depository of unknown and universal human instincts—archetypes—that are inherited from one generation to the next (Walker 8-9). Jung describes this unconscious psychic sphere as "the repository of [hu]man's experience and at the same time the prior condition of his [sic] experience" (Jung, "Two" 105). Housed within the collective unconscious are certain features—archetypes—that are not consciously acknowledged or known (Jung, "Collected" 4), but nevertheless structure peoples' actions and thoughts. Jung states that the collective unconscious, and the archetypes that comprise it, are inborn and universal ("Collected" 3), as well as inherited (42). While archetypes are inherited, archetypal images are not (Walker 13), as mental images are the "forms" that bring archetypes into conscious reality through dreams and visions (Walker 13). As such, archetypal images may be interpreted in multiple ways, but are based on particular universal archetypes of the collective unconscious. Archetypal images can be further expressed as archetypal motifs in fairy tale literature, contributing to myths: "the narrative elaborations of archetypal images (the conscious representations of the unconscious instincts)..." (Walker 18). Mythical narratives such as fairy tales are created through a process of revising universal and static archetypes according

to societal beliefs and demands—the process is decidedly culturally-elaborated (Walker 19). Fairy tales provide archetypal motifs—culturally influenced illustrations of the unconscious' archetypes, such as the Great Mother. However, the distinctions Jung provides in his theory of archetypes, archetypal images and motifs, are not accounted for in Birkhauser-Oeri's fairy tale analysis. She envisions the fairy tale genre as a static repository of archetypes, rather than culturally-mediated literature that displays changing archetypal motifs. The Great Mother archetype also refers to a collectively-inherited understanding of the general concept of mothering. According to Jungian psychology, the Mother archetype predisposes all individuals to seek a mother figure, as this desire is believed to be already imprinted in the unconscious part of the human psyche (Walker 10). For example, if one is to agree with Jung's perspective, the brother and sister in the Grimms' "Hansel and Gretel" may be attempting to find their good, biological mother by eating the magical candy house they find in the woods. After being abandoned by their mother/stepmother who is incapable of satisfying the children's hunger, the food house may be interpreted as the nourishing "good mother" they do not have. Bruno Bettelheim suggests that the mother is the primary source of food in the tale (159) and that the house is a source of sustenance, shelter and procreation (161). Similarly, Thurer believes that images of vessels or pots symbolize mothers' transformative and nourishing wombs (21). Though the abandoned children are left with no other choice but to find food, the witch's food house may exemplify the Jungian belief that all humans collectively desire the love and nourishment of a mother figure – particularly when mothering is absent.

Archetypal Mothers in Classic "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Rapunzel"

Mimicking Eve's fall from the Garden of Eden, good mothers in fairy tales consistently indulge their bodies with tempting food and pay the dire consequence by becoming unfit

mothers. In all three classic texts, the otherwise good, biological mother succumbs to her desires and is cast as excessive and irrational for unfairly placing her needs before those of her children. Within a psychoanalytic framework, these unfit mothers may represent the Great Mother archetype because the female body is directly associated with the life-giving properties of nature but also its indifferent side.

For instance, Rapunzel's mother in the Grimms' version denies her motherly role when she eats the forbidden rapunzel plant and is forced to give her newborn baby to the witch. Since her craving causes her "to waste away because she knew she would never get any" (Grimm 67), the alternative is for her to deny her hunger and die, effectively killing her baby. Although she saves her baby's life by eating forbidden food, she forfeits her right to mother her child, becoming an absent parent who is unable to protect her young from the witch. In a Jungian sense, Rapunzel's mother may represent the duality of the Mother archetype, as she brings life into the world but also causes social upheaval because of her transgressive hunger. As in the Biblical myth of the Garden of Eden, indulgence is deemed reprehensible as the mother and father give up their roles as parents because of their food transgressions. Fertile yet uncontrollably hungry, the mother-as-Great Mother motif comes full circle when the daughter is fittingly named after the plant that causes her mother's cravings and subsequent fall from motherhood. For instance, an alternative reading of the text may suggest that the baby causes her mother's lettuce cravings during the pregnancy; the baby's wishes have an imperious power over her. As she is named after the tempting plant, Rapunzel can be said to represent sustenance, but a sustenance that may threaten the accepted social order in regards to eating and good parenting. Furthermore, the mother's eating the rapunzel may be interpreted as the Great Mother's symbolic

role of "eating one's children" in order to maintain nature's life cycle. In this sense, the pregnant mother's consumption is directly related to death and decay.

In the 1857 version of "Hansel and Gretel," the Grimms present readers with an unmotherly stepmother who plots to abandon the children in order to have enough food for herself and her husband. Placing her needs before those of her young, she is cast as an evil mother who can easily be compared to the crafty and hungry witch. Zipes notes that the stepmother and witch call the children "lazybones," suggesting that the villain is the same character ("Happily" 49). Symbolically, the stepmother as witch evokes the terrible side of the Great Mother archetype by her close relationship to food, hunger, and eating. On one side, her ability to nourish the children as a good mother should never occurs, which is symbolic of the mercurial character of the Earth: to supply bounty and at other times, to withhold food. Sending the children out into the "witch's forest" (Zipes, "Happily" 45) appears to be a lethal move, as her husband believes the children will be torn to pieces by beasts (Grimm 138). The wood itself connotes the duplicitous nature of the Earth and the Great Mother archetype because the children find food, but beasts and ogres also threaten to eat them.

Tatar notes that the enchanted forest is home to the witch as villainous stepmother reincarnated ("Hard" 146), which has important consequences for how the woman as nature analog (Tong 238) can be interpreted in this tale. While both the stepmother's and the witch's evil are made apparent by their role in not supplying food, the witch is "more formidable" in the forest environment than she is in the home (146). This suggests that she better controls the natural world than she does the domestic sphere, an indication that she defies the accepted "angel in the house" myth of greater society at the time (Rich 168). Able to erect a sugary lure that plays into the children's hunger, the witch stands as a symbol for the Great Mother, as she is both a

provider and destructor. The witch can thus be seen as using her powers to shape nature—the forest and food—in order to greedily feed herself. Evidently, the witch and stepmother do not conform to the self-depriving good mother ideal (Zipes, "Happily" 55). The villains' two homes offer another stark binary opposition that confuses children's initial associations with the domestic and public spheres, furthering the lesson that "nothing is what it seems." For instance, children generally associate home with safety and the outside world with harm. However, the Grimms' "Hansel and Gretel" story initially confuses this notion, as home is threatening and barren and, until the witch reveals her plans, the bread house offers solace and comfort. The stepmother's lack of resources contrasted with the witch's excessive food (Tatar, "Hard" 210) associates their villainy with how they withhold and manipulate food. As such, a Jungian interpretation suggests that woman and nature cause moral and social chaos with their disguises; the witch masquerades as a nourishing mother figure and food is supplied for evil gains. Diane Purkiss discusses the "Hansel and Gretel" villain in *The Witch in History* as using maternity as disguise, as she supplies food, shelter, and rest (278). Eventually revealing herself to be a devourer rather than a nurturer, the witch goes beyond being simply a poor mother, as she manipulates the children to satisfy her own hunger. The stepmother is similarly "unmotherly," as she abandons the children in order to have enough food to feed herself. While the witch initially masquerades as a substitute mother, the real surrogate is symbolized in the white duck that helps Hansel and Gretel cross the river and return home safely after the evil stepmother has (coincidentally) died.

Although the well-known "Hansel and Gretel" tells of an evil stepmother, the Grimms' earlier editions include a biological mother who abandons her children. In the 1810 manuscript and the first edition of *Children's and Household Tales* published in 1812, the villain is related

to her children, whereas in 1819, evil rests with the stepmother. Zipes asserts that the erasure of the bad biological mother may have occurred for various reasons. Perhaps an evil mother upset the editors' own value systems, as they "revered" their mother ("Happily" 49). Or, the brothers may have been influenced by other literary fairy tales of the time that brimmed with evil stepmothers who begrudgingly looked after children who were not their own (49). Though the specific reason for this change is not known, in general it is clear that the images, patterns, and characters of fairy tales are subject to the motivations of their editors and authors, and do not necessarily reflect the collective unconscious.

The Grimms also similarly erased the villainous mother from later editions of "Snow White" published in *Children's and Household Tales*. The "Snow White" story published in 1812 shows the biological mother as the jealous villain who is determined to kill her beautiful daughter. For instance, in the Grimms' 1810 manuscript, the queen is both biological mother and villain, as she leaves her daughter in the woods. The mother as evil figure remains in the first published version of "Snow White" in 1812, but the queen asks the huntsman to kill her daughter for her (de Vos and Altmann 331). However, by 1819, the Grimm editors sought to separate the Great Mother archetype into distinct binary oppositions, manifested in the good, absent mother and inherently evil surrogate. Marina Warner interprets the disappearance of the evil and biological mother as a reflection of the Grimms' "romantic idealism" (Warner 212) about mothering, perhaps stemming from the loss of their mother when they were in their youth (Zipes, "Brothers" 9). A monstrous mother who is both good and evil—embodying all aspects of the Great Mother archetype—threatens the good mothering pedestal Wilhelm Grimm in particular wanted to uphold (Zipes, "Happily" 53), in keeping with Christian values (Warner 211). Stripping the mother of evil tendencies and placing them all on a stepmother figure does not

necessarily remove the Great Mother archetype from the tale completely. A Jungian critique may maintain that this divides Great Mother tendencies among multiple female characters rather than having one character embody the feminine "angel-woman" / "monster-woman" duality Maria Tatar, writing in *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales*, suggests is a common theme in Western cultural products (234). In the revised version, the evil queen never achieves maternal goodness, but only represents the deathly aspect of Mother Earth.

In the Grimms' "Snow White," the biological mother is more subtly cast as an unfit mother for her selfish and vain indulgence in nature's beauty. The tale also features the good/evil binary of womanhood as representative of the Earth, as shown through all three female protagonists. Firstly, the untimely death of Snow White's mother indicates the instability of the natural world, as her child's birth is dually symbolic of life and death. In the Grimms' 1819 edition of *Children's and Household Tales*, the queen wants her unborn daughter to embody characteristics derived from nature—the whiteness of snow, redness of blood, and the blackness of ebony. Her desire is duly granted, perhaps signifying that to some degree, she has the power to control the natural world; however, bringing Snow White into the world proves deadly for her mother, suggesting that the wondrous beauty of nature is threatening and ultimately uncontrollable. The birth/death dichotomy presented at the beginning of this tale may be interpreted as a symbol of the Great Mother archetype, as the mother evidently symbolizes fertility and creation, while her death is representative of the darker, unknown side of Mother Nature.

This dark side is extended further with the evil queen, who tries to poison and devour her stepdaughter in order to re-establish her title as the fairest in the land. Though the biological mother is inherently good, and the "alien interloper"—the stepmother—is evil, both female

characters succumb to the temptations of nature, which cause their roles as "good" mothers to falter. On the one hand, Snow White's mother is tempted to manufacture her baby after the beauty of nature, which leads to her daughter's persecution by the evil queen. Although there is no evidence in the Grimms' 1819 version that her biological mother purposely put Snow White in harm's way by wanting her to be attractive, nonetheless, her request for Snow White to emulate nature results in multiple near-deaths for her daughter. The good mother's maternal capacity to protect her daughter wanes because of her adoration of nature; emulating nature proves dangerous for Snow White. More explicitly, the mother's absence places her daughter in harm's way, as the mother is replaced by an evil substitute.

A Jungian interpretation may also suggest that Snow White represents aspects of the mothering archetype because of her evident symbolic ties to Nature as fertile and threatening. As her physicality is derived from elements of nature, Snow White can be said to represent the goodness of Earth and its destructive potential—as shown through her mother's death and her stepmother's "godless" wish to murder Snow White and eat her organs (Grimm 61). Snow White's beauty is evidently the most threatening to the jealous queen, as she targets her stepdaughter's defining hallmarks of attractiveness and identity: her skin, hair, and lips. For instance, the stepmother first uses a lace to strangle her, tying it so tightly that her breath is cut off (Grimm 63). After this failed attempt, the queen manufactures a poisoned comb that will take effect the moment it touches Snow White's black hair. Once more, the dwarves revive her. The queen's third weapon of choice—the apple—targets Snow White's red lips, and proves to be the most deadly lure of all. This Grimm version describes how the red side of the apple is poisonous, while the white cheek is safe (Grimm 65). The good, white side of the apple and its deadly red side are comparable to the binary opposition that constructs Snow White's identity as both pure

and potentially threatening. Snow White's red lips are thus symbolically connected to the beautiful yet lethal side of the apple, suggesting that this story represents an overall mistrust of nature and womanhood—beauty must be suspected as having dangerous side-effects if pursued or consumed. Similar to the Garden of Eden story, both products of nature—fruit and women—are nurturing and destructive.

Subtly, Snow White's terrible side manifests itself in her potential to cause chaos, as her beauty drives a mother figure—the queen—to attempted cannibalism and murder. The queen only tries to kill Snow White herself after her stepdaughter spends time at the dwarves' cottage. Beforehand, she orders the huntsman to kill Snow White. This suggests that Snow White's escape is symbolic of her transition to womanhood, as the queen becomes increasingly motivated to dispose of her once she becomes more mature. According to Bruno Bettelheim in *The Uses of Enchantment*, Snow White's journey away from home is symbolic of her budding sexuality (207) and a pre-adolescent stage of development (210). Once the queen arrives and tempts her with three various items, Snow White has become an adolescent, increasingly threatening because of her sexuality and potential to entice men. This is made apparent when Snow White gives into temptation three times, symbolizing her uncontrollable adolescent desire and immaturity. The third item, the apple, strongly represents both allure and transgression, as the forbidden fruit "stands for love and sex, in both its benevolent and its dangerous aspect" (Bettelheim 212). In addition, the huntsman's inability to kill Snow White further indicates her appeal to men, as he takes pity on her because of her beauty (Grimm 61) and not due to his conscience. In my opinion, considering when and how the queen conducts her murder attempts gestures towards Snow White's age, sexual development, and role as caregiver. The queen becomes more directly involved in the murder plot once her stepdaughter is an adult who cooks,

sews, and cleans for seven little men[3], signifying Snow White's adolescence and new role as domestic caregiver. This makes her all the more threatening to the queen, as the rivalry for male attention is now between women and not between a mother and a child. Therefore, a Jungian argument would maintain that Snow White becomes a Great Mother figure, as she nurtures the dwarves but also threatens the queen's title as fairest in the land and so threatens herself in the process.

Although scholars have commented on the rivalry between Snow White and her stepmother/mother as representative of the continued patriarchal "sexual contest" women are faced with in contemporary times (Tatar, "Hard" 234; Ayres 40), considering how female characters represent the universal mother archetype also highlights problematic assumptions, hopes and fears about feminine identity and gender roles. For instance, working within a Jungian framework begs the question: should womanhood as mother archetype—both nurturing and chaotic—be accepted as the universal definition of femininity? What does the mother archetype say about feminine identity when narrowly defined through concepts of mothering and sexuality?

Critiquing the Jungian belief in the Great Mother

Fairy tale classics present an image of woman as angel caregiver or evil temptress, conflating nature and woman as something to admire for her beauty, but at a distance. As discussed, Snow White and Rapunzel are described in relation to the Earth and cause much upheaval because of this link to the natural world: Snow White's mother dangerously indulges in the beauty of nature, requesting a beautiful daughter who takes after the Earth, while Rapunzel's mother gives into temptation and eats the bewitched rapunzel plant. Both suffer the

[3] The Grimms' "Snow White" does not state the dwarfs' sex explicitly. However, Bettelheim suggests that the dwarfs are men, stating that "there are no female dwarfs" (210). Although he does not qualify why this is, he points to their mining occupation as having phallic connotations.

consequences, losing the opportunity to mother their daughters. Most explicitly, the candy house the witch manufactures to lure Hansel and Gretel is representative of the ambivalent mother who offers food, but in the end, places her needs before her children's. As such, the dual nature of the Great Mother in the classic fairy tale texts emphasizes women's expected role in providing care and food for children and men, but also the fear that some women will deny this role and become excessively self-interested and powerful.

Feminists such as Adrienne Rich and Shari Thurer contend that ideas about good mothering are myths that attempt to limit and control womanhood. As a result, feminine identity comes to be understood in terms of how well a woman mothers her child, which involves a denial of her individual desires. Otherwise, women are cast as the dangerous and inappropriate other (Rich 183)—an image seen in the classic fairy tale texts with cannibalistic, overbearing, and self-indulgent stepmothers and witches. Further, women and the natural world are symbolically one and the same in the classic fairy tales, as both may be tempting and beautiful, but inherently cause destruction. The classics thus maintain what ecofeminists call the naturalization of women and the feminization of nature, as woman is "nature's human analog" and the Earth is seen as conquerable (Tong 238), despite its allure and potential threats. The symbolic link between women and nature becomes all the more disconcerting if man is considered to master and subdue the uncontrollable side of Mother Nature.

The Jungian argument that the Great Mother archetype is harboured in fairy tales as evidence of the "psyche [that] tells its own story" (Jung, "Psyche" 85), should be critiqued as promoting an oppressive binary opposition as a psychological, universal truth. This Jungian perspective assumes that all women are primary caregivers and will make good mothers (Tong 193) and also prescribes a very narrow view of good mothering practices. As mentioned by

Zipes, some fairy tale scholarship, such as psychoanalysis, "has simultaneously played a part in casting a magic spell over the vital quality of the tales, diluting their socio-historical import and often obscuring problems with extraneous material" ("Breaking" 22). In sum, a Jungian interpretation highlights the problematic myths of motherhood and sexuality attached to female characters in the classic "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Rapunzel."

Contemporary Fairy Tales: Unravelling the Great Mother Myth

The next step in critiquing the representation of food and women in these three stories is to question the mystique of woman as Mother Nature, particularly when contemporary tales rework women's association with the Earth through revised use of food imagery, eating, and sexual connotations. In general, the contemporary feminist texts chosen for analysis use various literary strategies that make readers question the patterns and supposed universalities of the classics. These feminist authors use the fairy tale story as a vehicle to critique barriers to gender equality, as the well-known classics harbour constructs that readers believe are natural, and must be interrogated and revealed as culturally-motivated social structures (Fullerton, "Sexing" 16-17). For instance, feminist author Angela Carter explains her work as questioning what is familiar and assumed as commonplace. In a similar vein to Barthes' comment that myth hides its ideological abuse (11), Carter states that she questions "what certain configurations of imagery in our society, in our culture, really stand for, what they mean, underneath the kind of semi-religious coating that makes people not particularly want to interfere with them" (Katsavos 12). The fairy tale motifs that feminist authors use as the basis for their criticism is this "semi-religious coating" that contemporary revisionists seek to wipe clean and reinvigorate with new meaning.

In general, the revised fairy tales I analyze in this chapter are the next attempt to challenge the social boundaries erected as commonplace in the classic texts. Virtuous, evil and inhumane characters in the contemporary tales are not defined through binary oppositions, but through new politically-charged associations that disrupt the classics' well-known patterns and constructs. As my analysis of the classic versions of "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Rapunzel" highlights, female characters are oppressed by the fixed, patriarchal understanding of what women signify (Peach 11). Therefore, the feminist revisionist project is a political one, as these contemporary fairy tales have a purpose: to question the naturalised associations of womanhood put forth in the Grimms' stories and to "fill" signs of womanhood with alternative and perhaps unexpected meanings. For instance, Carter suggests in "The Snow Child" that Snow White is manufactured through her father's sexual longings, and not her mother's wish to have a pretty daughter. This aspect of the tale critiques the classic, as the mother's desire for a child who is black, white, and red is actually informed by male desire. By playing with signs' connotations, feminist authors are able to subvert patriarchal definitions of femininity and make readers aware that fairy tales are not static or universal—they can be changed (Zipes, "Myth" 16) to better reflect the needs and desires of its audiences and authors.

Some of the contemporary writers situate their stories within the horror genre, as Neil Gaiman does in "Snow, Glass, Apples," while Elizabeth A. Lynne's "Princess in the Tower" parodies classic "Rapunzel." Though horror and parody appear dissimilar, these tales have the same effect—shocking their readers with surprise revisions that push audiences to question the supposed universality of the classics' characters and plots (Fullerton, "Sexing" 20). All the contemporary tales rely on their readers' knowledge of the problematic old stories in order to serve as fodder for revision and discussion. Feminist fairy tale authors are therefore working to

"disenchant" (Zipes, "Breaking" 22) the classics that have been canonized by fields of scholarship like psychoanalysis. Contrary to the Jungian perspective, feminist authors and scholars are critical of the classics' myths and assumptions, and are pragmatic in offering alternative visions of gender and power.

Contemporary "Rapunzel" Tales: The Denial of Food and Feminine Identity

Similar to the critique Angela Carter puts forth in her revision of "Snow White," Jenny Diski's "The Vanishing Princess or the Origins of Cubism" presents a Rapunzel-esque character who is unable to break free from the oppression of male desire and form her own identity. Unlike the Grimms' classic, Diski does not divulge how the girl comes to be imprisoned in the castle, simply stating that she was brought there after her birth, by people who call themselves her relatives (31). Diski's heroine is unnamed and is not whisked away by the witch, who imprisons Rapunzel during her adolescence (Grimm 68). Instead, the princess grows up in a tower, and is eventually abandoned by her relatives. The mother figures of classic "Rapunzel"—the biological mother and the witch—are omitted from Diski's revision, which immediately disassociates the heroine from forces of nature. For instance, the Grimms' story begins with the mother falling helpless to the allure of the witch's rapunzel plant, which leads to the couple losing their daughter to the witch, who names her after the bewitched lettuce (Grimm 68). Therefore, Diski's princess' identity is not symbolically related to the allure and forbidden quality of food because she does not cause her mother to fall for temptation and fall from her role as good mother. Further evidence of the heroine's disassociation from the Great Mother myth is through her lack of appetite. Diski's heroine is ignorant of the world outside the tower, and does not know that she needs to eat—she never learns that food is necessary (Diski 33). Contrary to the classic tale, the princess in the tower is not named after a bewitched item of food, which may also relate to

her lack of interest in eating. Diski's decision to remove Rapunzel's mother and witch from the tale places greater emphasis on men's greed and greatly de-emphasizes women's association with nature—their role in offering food, eating, and nurturing men.

The Grimms' Rapunzel is also a more maternal character than Diski's princess—the former cures her prince's blindness, while the latter disappears without a trace as a result of male selfishness. Rapunzel can be said to represent Great Mother maternal kindness when her tears cure the prince's damaged eyes. At this point in the classic story, Rapunzel may be interpreted as having good, magical powers that she uses to nurture a man. On the other hand, Diski's tale revises this image of woman as nurturer, as the princess herself is forced to disappear when she can no longer recognize herself. I further contend that despite the princes' greedy self-interests, these male characters may be initially interpreted as traditional caregivers, for one supplies the girl with food and the other allows her to learn the concept of time and introduces her to herself, by way of a mirror. However, in the end, the princes do not care for her; they visit her when they have nothing better to do (Diski 33) and want to keep her in the tower for their own amusement. In addition, I believe that such an interpretation of the male characters as good nurturers is ultimately flawed because Diski seems to critique the notion that the princess needs food, a calendar, and a mirror, when she has no use for them herself. These are needs that are placed upon her, given to her because the princes have told her they are essentials. This is made amply clear when the calendar's and mirror's purposes are manipulated according to the men's desires, resulting in the princess' obsolescence and disappearance. For instance, the calendar is not only used to teach the princess the concept of time, but also is used to force her to look forward to the prince's return, which creates a look of expectation and disappointment in her eyes about which the prince fantasizes (Diski 39). The mirror is introduced as a means of self-identification, but it

is ultimately taken over by the princes, who etch pictures of the princess' body parts into the mirror's surface. With so many sketches, the princess can no longer see herself, and says: 'I'm not here. Perhaps I never was'"(Diski 37), and she disappears.

A greater critique of the male objectification and fetishization of women, Diski's revision stresses that the classic "Rapunzel" is informed by problematic myths of romance, good mothering, and female passivity. Deleting the heroine's maternal act of healing her prince, and including seemingly nurturing acts by male characters, Diski's story challenges the essentialist notion that good women are natural mothers (Tong 193) who always supply food and mother their children and men. Further, Diski's erasure of the mother, witch, and rapunzel greatly demystifies women's association with Mother Earth.

"The Princess in the Tower" by Elizabeth A. Lynne is a modern-day tongue-in-cheek parody of "Rapunzel" that pokes fun at the classic's treatment of women and food. The town of I_____[4] is characterized by its food aromas and "buxom" women, who are all named after various types of pasta (Lynne 198). This relates to the classic "Rapunzel," in which the heroine is named after the forbidden lettuce that her mother craves (Grimm 154). In such a food-centric town, beauty is directly related to the amount one eats—the bigger the woman, the more beautiful. However, the golden-haired, Rapunzel-like Margheritina—named after pasta that resembles *funghini* (Lynne 198)—does not excessively indulge in food as much as the other girls in the town, which causes her to be ridiculed for her smaller size. Although Margheritina is named after an item of food, her appetite is not uncontrollable, unlike Rapunzel's association with irrational food cravings.

[4] The name of the town is kept a secret throughout Lynne's tale, as well as the identities of Margheritina's family, Fred, and her doctor. This relates to the secrecy surrounding Rapunzel's location. In the classic version, the witch imprisons her in a tower without steps or a door, in an unknown forest (Grimm 154), which suggests that her mother captor wants no one to know her whereabouts.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Rapunzel can be said to cause her mother's undoing, as her pregnancy causes an unbearable desire to eat the witch's forbidden rapunzel plant. However, Margheritina's fairly regular appetite in comparison to others' unhealthy eating trivializes the classic's depiction of the hungry mother as irrational actor and the witch as overbearing mother. Through its exaggeration, "The Princess in the Tower" further contextualizes why Rapunzel's mother may have felt so strongly towards consuming the lettuce in the classic—because she has been raised in a town obsessed with food and eating—and not because of her pregnancy or her baby's cravings. In addition, Margheritina's supposedly unnatural disinterest in eating more than two portions a sitting results in her persecution by her doctor and mother, who believe she must be locked in the house so as not to hurt herself (Lynne 206). Therefore, Lynne's tale offers potential reasons for Rapunzel's mother-as-witch's decision to lock the girl away, placing blame on the town's oppressive female beauty standard. Margheritina's lack of appetite and small size challenge the accepted beauty ideal in her community. The other women develop bodies that are comparable to items one would eat, with their soft flesh, and "billowy, cushiony bulk which their men prize" (Lynne 200). "As flat as a dinner plate" (Lynne 199), Margheritina denies her mythical association with food and eating, which also allows her to be treated less as an object for male consumption.

From a Jungian perspective, on one hand, Lynne's heroine repeats the classic tale's representation of women as symbols of the threatening side of nature. For instance, she refuses to eat more than she wants, despite being pressured to eat. This causes her mother to lock her away in their tower. At this point in the tale, she acts similarly to an overbearing witch rather than as a good mother. Therefore, Margheritina's appetite causes her mother to fall from good motherhood. Similarly, Rapunzel causes her mother's cravings, her transgression, and her fall

from motherhood. Both characters' close proximity to appetite, eating, and food results in social chaos, as maternal figures become bad or absent mothers. Margheritina may be interpreted as reiterating "terrible mother" characteristics, as she denies her "natural" feminine role in fostering growth and fertility (Birkhauser-Oeri 14)—she withholds food from herself, and in so doing, upsets her community's beauty ideal and her mother's status as a good mother. However, I contend that Lynne purposely uses food and eating as her primary means for making a feminist critique against the classic rendition's portrayal of women as representations of nature. Margheritina's smaller appetite disassociates her from the food-centred identity placed upon her by her parents. Her appetite also threatens the social order, but for good reason—to question her community's oppressive myth of feminine beauty. In sum, although Lynne's "Princess in the Tower" presents a heroine who is defined by her eating and food choices, this pokes fun at the classic's naturalized treatment of women as symbolically equal to nature's products.

Contemporary "Hansel and Gretel" Tales: Witch as Malevolent, Self-Centred Mother

Priscilla Galloway's "The Woodcutter's Wife" is told from the stepmother witch's perspective, going into great detail about her plans to ensnare her family in order to ensure her own survival. Contrary to Gaiman's revision of the stepmother witch in "Snow White," Galloway retains the (step)mother's evil qualities seen in the classic "Hansel and Gretel" by explicitly making the mother figure and witch the same character. As Zipes has commented, the Grimms' tale subtly aligns the two female characters, as both call the children "lazybones" (Grimm 138, 142; Zipes, "Happily" 49) and, coincidentally, both women die at the same time. Galloway's stepmother is a three-hundred year-old witch, who uses her magical powers to drink blood from her husband and stepchildren (109), as well as plot the children's abandonment. The stepmother—named Helga—states that she is not a cannibal (107), but requires human blood in

order to cast spells and retain her powers. Motivated by self-interest, Helga feeds herself by draining a cup of blood from her family members during the night, which in turn, contributes to their "desperately poor" state, as her husband lacks the energy to cut wood and then sell it (109). However, Helga fully intends on purposely driving the family to starvation, as it gives her husband the justification he needs to abandon his children twice, and also makes her gingerbread lure more effective on the hungry children.

On the surface, "The Woodcutter's Wife" does not revise the majority of the witch's actions, and Helga appears to be projected as a natural provider of food in the home and in the forest. In keeping with the Grimms' version, Helga's domestic role is to supply food, though she is unable to provide nourishment like a good mother. However, Galloway's witch is able to provide food, but purposely withholds it from the family, whereas the Grimms' stepmother is unable to be a motherly provider because of greater famine (Grimm 139). Helga is therefore depicted as a more malevolent stepmother, and may seem to embody the negative side of the Great Mother archetype—a figure that keeps secrets, devours, and poisons (Birkhauser-Oeri 14). However, one must take into account that Helga does not wish to eat the children or her husband, but plans on living parasitically off of their blood in order to remain a witch. She says: "Alive and fat, they could supply blood for all the spells I would ever need" (Galloway 121). Helga's lack of cannibalistic desire revises the Grimm tale greatly, throwing into question whether Galloway's stepmother witch is representative of the terrible side of the Great Mother. Instead of devouring the children outright, she rationalizes that their blood and Hansel's physical strength will be more helpful, since her power is waning (Galloway 122). Therefore, her manipulative plot to initially withhold food and then lure the children in with a household of plenitude is all conducted in order to stabilize her fading magical powers—to ensure she can survive. The

context Galloway provides in her tale appears to justify Helga's actions, particularly since she does not devour the children, as a terrible mother would. In addition, the stepmother's association with the forest as a site of transformation and her withholding and giving of food may evoke Great Mother parallels, though her dependence on her family for survival indicates her lack of overall power. In summary, Galloway presents a tale that is similar to the classic in its reiteration of women's role in providing food and manipulating nature; however, telling the story through the stepmother witch's eyes subverts her clear-cut identification as a terrible mother actor. In so doing, "The Woodcutter's Wife" challenges the notion that villains are always wholly evil, while it also critiques the myth that good mother figures must deny their needs for their families.

Emma Donoghue's "Hansel and Gretel" retelling, "The Tale of the Cottage," takes a much different approach from all the other tales selected for my thesis. Like Galloway's, Donoghue's story is told from a female perspective—that of the little girl. The girl's narration adds an air of realism, as Donoghue writes with the grammar and syntax of a small child. In plotting to abandon the children, the girl's father comments: "The little one's no earthly use not right in the head" (Donoghue 128). Although my initial interpretation was that the speaker is very young, her father's[5] comment may also mean that the girl has a learning disability. This only adds to the father's villainy, for he is the one who wants to abandon his little girl, picking her, it seems, because she is "not right in the head." The transfer of evil from the (step)mother to the father immediately disassociates the mother from the terrible side of the mother archetype, because it is the father who displays the greedy self-interest to feed himself rather than his

[5] The girl does not refer to him as her "father," but calls him "Huntman" throughout, though this man appears to be a father figure. This may mean that the man is her stepfather, or the girl does not feel comfortable calling him her father, particularly since he is abusive.

children. The mother figure is portrayed as helpless—she does not stand up to her husband's beatings[6] or his idea to abandon the child, while she often weeps. In one instance, the mother "put brother and me sleeping with chickens not annoy huntman" (sic) (127), indicating that the father is easily perturbed or angered. Through Donoghue's reversal of the wicked figure, women's association with food is decreased, while the "huntman" is more obviously a failure to his family, for he cannot bring food to the table. Although it may seem that the emphasis of this retelling is on fatherhood rather than motherhood, the girl decides to stay with the witch, after telling her brother, "Home not home if mother not mother" (133). I interpret this as a critique of her mother's lack of power, her inability to keep her children safe, and also her lack of nurturing in the wake of being abused. The girl more clearly sees the problems with her home once she experiences another home and surrogate mother—one that matches her values and needs.

The woman in the cottage provides nourishment, shelter, and also stands up to the brother's sexual advances. The woman is not called a witch in Donoghue's rendition, and she is also described as young, "her eyes red like crying. Face smooth like girl" (131). After the boy "lift her skirt behind," the woman pulls out a knife and threatens to slit his throat if he does not get into the cage (132). The girl learns that she plans on skinning him like a rabbit, but this does not deter her from wanting to call the enchanted cottage her home. The girl is also an assertive figure—she finds the key to the cage and saves her brother. Although the speaker does not kill the woman, the girl is similar to Gretel, who also frees her brother from imprisonment.

The changes Donoghue makes to the classic story do not necessarily disassociate women from the good mother archetype, particularly since the girl seems to desire the typical comforts of the maternal home—a mother who provides food, shelter, symbolic and literal warmth. As

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[6] The little girl says: "One night hit her harder whap whap so her voice went big into rafters woke chickens say, Curse you" (Donoghue 127).

such, the woman in the cottage may be a reincarnation of the Great Mother archetype, for she provides sustenance and life, but she is also partly threatening, since she locks the brother up for his sexual assault.

The girl's biological mother, on the other hand, may also be interpreted as a Great Mother figure, embodying both sides of the binary. In line with the good mother concept, she does care about her children—she does not want them to disappear, and she weeps incessantly. There is a sense that her victimization by her husband does not allow her to mother 'properly,' an important qualification if one were to label her a terrible mother. On the surface, her inability to provide food is actually her husband's fault, as he is the 'breadwinner' in the family. This critiques the classics' assumption that it is mothers' sole responsibility to provide food, though they are often depicted as domestic housewives. However, after the mother curses her husband for beating her, the "huntman" is not able to find any game from then on (127). This suggests the mother has a spiritual connection to nature, that she can withhold food as punishment for abuse. In a similar manner to the woman in the cottage who created a magical house out of food, the girl's mother is also reactive to her assailant, and displays a threatening ability to control the natural world. However, this view espouses that blame should be placed on the woman, rather than the man, who, if he had refrained from beating his wife, would not be in the predicament at all. Overall, Donoghue's tale illustrates instances of misogyny, female oppression, and also empowerment. "The Tale of the Cottage" brings domestic violence to the fore, bringing a problem of the private sphere to light in the fairy tale.

Contemporary "Snow White" Tales: Sex, Blood, and Death

The two contemporary Snow White tales chosen for this thesis—Carter's "Snow Child" and Gaiman's "Snow, Glass, Apples" –are dark and disturbing stories that highlight the

patriarchal tendencies of the older classic. By interrogating the symbolism of well-known motifs, such as Snow White's "redness" and her temporary death, the authors question the supposed innocence and archetypes of the Grimm version. Many of the feminist criticisms I mention previously are prominent themes in Carter's retelling—primarily the concepts of male desire, sexual maturity, and the rivalry between (step)mother and daughter. Instead of duplicating the witch villain, Carter inserts a male character into the story in order to critique the classics' patriarchal tendencies. The Count is a philandering necrophiliac—he has sex with his dead "child of desire" (Carter 92) while his wife watches. It is unclear whether the girl can be considered the couple's daughter, as she suddenly appears before them after the Count wishes to "have" a girl that is white as snow, red as a hole filled with blood, and as dark as a raven's feather (Carter 91). Carter uses the word "have" intentionally in order to question the motivations behind desiring a child who looks a certain way. By inserting the lustful Count, "Snow Child" problematizes the classic's well-known beginning: the queen wishes for a beautiful girl who is as white, red, and black as items found in nature. However, Carter questions where this desire comes from, and ultimately gestures that this wish is informed by male sexual cravings.

Therefore, although the classic's good queen may appear to represent the Great Mother archetype—as she seems to control nature to fulfill her own wishes—in actuality, her degree of power lessens when one acknowledges that her desires are not necessarily her own. Therefore, "having a girl" connotes sexual desire in the "Snow Child," rather than meaning "to have a baby." Interestingly, Carter did not need to alter this verb in her rendition, as its connotations already imply ownership and control over a female figure. This is certainly made clear when the girl dies after picking a rose to give to the Count, who then has sex with her body. The girl's beauty and death can be said to reflect male sexual desire but also the wish to dominate and

control women. Snow White's association with nature is maintained in this contemporary tale, as she is made from Mother Earth's materials; however, Carter critiques the archetype of "nature as woman" as patriarchal, as "she" is manufactured and by a man readers assume is her father. Though a king or count is absent from the classic "Snow White," the audience likely assumes that the Count's desires are uttered as a father. This makes his incestuous necrophilia all the more surprising and disturbing for readers. On the other hand, the audience may interpret the Count as a reincarnation of the classic's prince, who, upon finding Snow White's glass coffin, "cannot go on living without looking at [her]" (Grimm 153). Again subject to the male gaze, Snow White's beauty can be said to attract men even in death. In sum, Carter's choice to add a male necrophiliac fulfills her objective to probe the subtleties of language—of signs' oppressive and hidden meanings in order to reclaim what narratives can signify for women (Peach 11). Carter's Count therefore interrogates what Snow White's temporary death indicates about men's relationship with women, as shown through the classic text: Men want to possess and objectify passive women.

"The Snow Child" also critiques the classic version's coming-of-age theme, as Carter's story stresses that the girl cannot have "found herself" when her identity is defined by male desire. For instance, in Carter's tale, the young female character is not named—she is simply referred to as "the girl." As a child of the Count's desire (Carter 92), the girl's identity and existence are dependent on his thoughts and actions. The girl's indoctrination into womanhood is signified with the rose that causes her to bleed—a symbol of menstruation. It is no coincidence that the Count has sex with her body after this occurs, as her pricked finger also symbolizes blood spilled during intercourse—evident with the bloodstain left in the snow where the girl's

body used to lie (Carter 92). The fact that she melts after the Count has finished with her is further evidence that the girl's identity and existence is predicated on her male creator's needs.

Carter's Snow Child, like Snow White, is representative of the Great Mother because Carter's girl represents nature in human form—through her looks and nurturing attitude. Both characters are selfless providers who look after men. Snow White cooks and cleans for the dwarfs, and the girl obeys the Count's commands, dying in the process. Adhering to the good mother convention associated with the Great Mother archetype, the Snow Child and Snow White lose a sense of their identity when they selflessly care for men and are products of male sexual desires. Carter's revision emphasizes that Snow White's transition from girl to woman is flawed and incomplete, as so much of her identity is relative to others' fantasies. "The Snow Child" makes clear that Snow White is an objectified character, as she is formed out of elements of nature, according to other people's wishes. She also transitions to womanhood through the "fall" from the villain's apple, or in Carter's tale, from a rose. Both traps are tempting and beautiful products of nature with lethal consequences, which exemplifies the duplicity of the Great Mother archetype. However, the flower that draws blood and causes death in "The Snow Child" has clearer associations with menstruation and sex than the poisoned apple—because it symbolizes sexual 'deflowering.' Since the Count asks the girl to retrieve the rose for him, Carter's tale stresses that Snow White is not necessarily ready to become a woman, but is pushed into this stage of her life by a greedy and self-centred villain.

"The Snow Child" also makes the rivalry between the (step)mother and girl more apparent, as Carter emphasizes the queen/countess' dependence on her husband. For instance, the Countess' clothing is slowly stripped off of her as her husband's attention drifts to the girl, who magically attains the other woman's garments. Not only is this symbolic of a beauty contest

to win a man's affections, but represents the Count's power over his wife, as he literally clothes her. This indicates the Countess' monetary and emotional dependence. In opposition, an alternative reading may suggest that the Countess is a witch, capable of transferring her clothes to the girl in order to hide her nakedness from her husband. This interpretation is representative of the Great Mother archetype—the Countess' possible powers can be said to control nature. However, when the Countess is left naked in the snow, her husband feels sorry for her, which suggests that she does not have magical powers. If she were a witch, she would likely keep her own clothes and punish the Count for his transgression. Therefore, the removal of the Countess' clothing relates to the classic's contest for male attention, as the evil queen fears Snow White will replace her and win men's devotion. In Carter's revision, the Countess is helpless to the whims of her husband, allowing him to create, pursue, and kill the object of his sexual fantasy. Contrary to the Jungian interpretation that the queen controls and manipulates nature to serve her own interests, "The Snow Child" indicates that neither female character is able to move past the patriarchal pressure to win male attention.

Neil Gaiman's horror story, "Snow, Glass, Apples," questions the social boundaries and naturalised assumptions of the classic text by subverting who is good and evil. Readers learn the stepmother queen's perspective in this retelling, and learn that Snow White's well-known version of the story has purposely obscured the truth, and the queen's evil actions were taken to protect her kingdom from her vampire stepdaughter. At the age of six, the girl feeds on her stepmother and her father—the latter eventually dies; the scars from her bites cover his entire body. Gaiman thus associates the child heroine with explicit sexual dominance over a father figure, subverting the image of child innocence, female passivity and purity seen in the classic "Snow White." While the Grimms' heroine is wrongly persecuted, Gaiman questions whether

Snow White is wholly innocent. The queen's order to murder her stepdaughter appears justified in the revised tale, rather than conducted out of a jealous rage. Thus, Gaiman challenges multiple constructs that appear natural in the classic: the sexual and moral innocence of the child girl, and the belief that stepmothers are always inherently evil witches. The girl's villainous qualities will be explored in more depth in chapter two's discussion of the power and horror of the *vagina dentate* myth; however, focusing on this revisionist text's depiction of the queen as a good and maternal witch is a point to discuss further.

Although the (step)mother in the Grimms' "Snow White" is not explicitly referred to as a witch, her magic mirror and ability to concoct an apple poisonous only on one side hint that she has magical powers. However, Gaiman's stepmother confuses the clear-cut definition of what and who is considered good and evil, as the queen is more plainly associated with witchcraft, but uses her powers for good though sometimes violent ends. For instance, Gaiman gives more description of the queen's poisoning of a basket of apples, soaking them in her own blood in order to entice her vampire stepdaughter (522). She also says: "I added the powder from the vial that hung around my neck. It was a brown dust, made of dried herbs and the skin of a particular toad..." (Gaiman 522). Although the queen may be a witch, she uses her powers to rid the forest of the predator that is killing all the "forest folk" (Gaiman 520). This trope of tricking Snow White with poisoned apples is thus repeated, which may mean that the queen is still figured as a Great Mother who manipulates nature to do her evil bidding. However, the queen's violence—she orders her stepdaughter be taken into the forest and have her heart cut out—is necessary in order to restore peace and security. The good stepmother witch conflates the black-and-white definitions of good and evil ascribed to biological and surrogate mothers in classic fairy tales in general. Specifically, this female character challenges the myth of the good mother as selfless,

passive, and all-loving towards children. By having the queen tell her own story, Gaiman stresses that there are particular situations that warrant an "unmotherly" action in order to restore order and protect others—which in itself, is a maternal act.

Therefore, the queen in "Snow, Glass, Apples" may be representative of the good and terrible tendencies of the Great Mother archetype, as she is motivated to nurture her subjects, but is willing to murder in order to do so. However, this story also criticizes such a binary opposition, as she states that her stepdaughter has drawn on the preconceived construct of stepmothers being witches in order to disseminate a false story—the classic Grimm tale. For instance, the queen stresses that she was not fooled by her huntsman and did not eat human flesh, as the classic text suggests: "They say I was fooled; that it was not her heart. That it was the heart of an animal—a stag, perhaps, or a boar. They say that, and they are wrong. And some say (but it is her lie, not mine) that I was given the heart, and that I ate it" (Gaiman 519). This suggests that the queen is not as evil as the classic presents her, though she certainly resorts to violence to restore peace. Gaiman's revision emphasizes that female identity should not be represented in stark oppositions between good and evil women, since the queen has dark, supernatural powers that at times align with her vampire stepdaughter. This is emphasized in the conclusion of the tale, when the queen recounts her execution day and she "sees herself" reflected in her evil stepdaughter's eyes before she is engulfed in flames (Gaiman 525). In summary, Gaiman's feminist revision of the "Snow White" classic is largely predicated on altering who is considered good and evil, subverting the association of goodness with biologically-related mothers and evilness with witchy stepmothers.

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Discussing the Grimms' fairy tales psychoanalytically highlights that the good women—the absent mothers and heroines—are consistently associated with food, transgressive eating, and subsequently, the uncontrollable nature of the Earth. The biological mothers in "Snow White" and "Rapunzel" are figured as 'good' earth mothers, in that they supply life through their newborn daughters. However, their appetites cause them to lose their prized roles as mothers, indicating that their indulgences in forbidden fare or the beauty of nature are to be punished. According to a Jungian framework, this transgression may be seen as a reflection of the terrible mother, the destructive side of the archetype. In a similar manner, the protagonists are projected as wholly good characters; however, there are also moments of forbidden indulgence in their cravings, which cause temporary death and imprisonment. After the momentary satisfaction of their desires and fall from temptation, order is eventually restored, and the heroes or heroines go on to 'live happily ever after.'

Although I illustrate that good fairy tale women can be interpreted in terms of the Great Mother binary—their relationship to the dual goodness and threatening power of the Earth—this theory problematically assumes that women signify maternity, and this concept is somehow unchanging and timeless. Although Jung posits that universal, inherited archetypes are illustrated through culturally influenced archetypal images, Jungian literary criticism of fairy tales focuses on the classic tales exclusively, rather than possible changes to this imagery over time. Further, they do not give material or political reasons for these representations. Birkhauser-Oeri and von Franz's contention that fairy tales exemplify unconscious psychic processes, and that they are not influenced by the realities of production (von Franz 11) or patriarchy (Birkhauser-Oeri 18) is highly reductive and uncritical. The Great Mother concept highlights the very problem of the

classics' pattern in representing women as good or evil through their mothering—through food, shelter, and appetite. It is for this very reason that I analyze the selected fairy tales according to a Jungian view, drawing attention to certain motifs that the stories project about womanhood. At the same time, the changes made to the sacred classic texts trivialize these assumptions, either by poking fun, horrifying, or otherwise defamiliarizing readers from the texts' predictability and patterns.

My analysis of the contemporary tales also illustrates that the Great Mother archetype can be found in these versions, but these archetypal images are included for a political purpose—in order to critique the classic's presumptions about women. These new versions are inherently dependent on the problematic classics—feminist authors must include enough of the storyline for audiences to recognize the tale and then be shocked by what follows. This opens the door for an assault on the classic tradition, but contemporary authors must link women to mothering, food, and appetite in order to problematize the original symbolism. As such, some characters in feminist retellings prescribe to both sides of the Great Mother archetype, or embody either the good or destructive sides, since the classic tales placed precedence on a narrow, oppressive view of mothering.

Chapter II

The Woman with Teeth: Images of Female Monstrosity and Abjection

In the classic fairy texts I analyze, good mothers are similar to their female archenemies, since both characters' gendered and moral identity is established through their consumption choices, their role in supplying or denying food, and also their manipulation and enchantment of nature. The classics' good yet easily tempted mothers have some power over the natural world, and the villains similarly use nature as part-and-parcel of themselves; however, they do so in a much more lethal and self-interested manner. As I will discuss in this chapter, the jealous and hungry witches seen in "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Rapunzel" are identified as monstrously 'other' due to their lack of normative femininity: this witchy ogress character defies multiple social constructions, by challenging definitions of gender, sexuality, and morality. As a result, she is othered, cast as inhuman and monstrous. Consistently, classic villain's evil status is established through food and nature motifs. I suggest that this is due to authors' choices in constructing these characters as representing mythic understandings of the female body's reproductive functions, rather than as proof of the Great Mother archetype's universality.

Women's biological capacity to bear children overshadows, defines, and limits what femininity signifies in well-known fairy tales. The classics' villains are further evidence of this mothering myth, as their association with food and nature plays a significant part in defining the witch and/or stepmother as evil. The woman who threatens—cannibalizes, castrates, and otherwise acts unmotherly—is cast as excessive and wholly 'bad' in these classic versions. Though the fairy tale witch may be exemplary of the terrible mother archetype in some respects, this representation must be further interrogated and historicized in order to lay bare these

naturalized understandings of good and bad womanhood, as well as woman's repeated association with food, consumption, and nature.

The Great Mother Binary: More than a Limitation of Language

Much of my thesis is concerned with analyzing binaries that appear in fairy tale texts, and how these oppositions help structure—both limit and frame—gender roles and identity. According to semiotic theory, signs depend on differentiation and binaries in order to attain meaning. Therefore, binaries are an inherent part of language. What is included and excluded from the classic texts' frame says much about the authors' or the audience's social views. For example, in "Snow White," the evil queen is the girl's biological mother in the 1812 version of the Grimms' *Nursery and Household Tales*, but in subsequent revisions leading up to "the standard final edition of 1857," villainy is transferred to the girl's stepmother (Tatar, "Hard" 24; 36; 143).[7] Distancing monstrous jealousy from blood-related mothers was a common theme for the Grimm brothers, who tended to associate all evil with witches or stepmothers while often removing blood-related mothers from their collections. As a result, there is "a complete absorption of maternal figures into the realm of evil" (Tatar, "Off" 232), as there are few alternative depictions of women, other than those of the innately good heroines in the later, more well-known versions. The expulsion of witchy biological mothers from the Grimm fairy tale frame establishes a stark boundary between good and bad actors, judgements based largely on biology and sex; male villains certainly existed in earlier oral folk tales. Maria Tatar notes that the fairy tale editors—those she calls "collectors" of literary fairy tales—were male, and preferred evil women over male villains, since folktales featuring evil men were often not chosen

[7] The first two editions of *Children's and Household Tales* were published in 1812 and 1815, and were not intended for children, but the brothers called the 1819 edition an educational book (*Erziehungsbuch*), "carefully eliminat[ing] those passages [which] they thought would be harmful for children's eyes" (Zipes, "Art" 48).

for their collections ("Off" 233). I refer to these historical facts to show how the Grimms' stories are framed according to problematic gender norms and 19th century bourgeois ideology. The binary between good and bad women therefore plays a large part in presenting a narrow black-and-white definition of womanhood.

Since binaries are an inherent part of language, they are an inherent part of formulating and structuring discourses of gender, sexuality, and food seen in the classic and contemporary fairy tale texts I analyze. However, this recognition that binaries *are* needed to communicate does not mean that language is exempt from critique, since binaries are linked to ideology and power. Binary oppositions are discussed by structuralists Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes as fundamental to language and myths respectively, but this is critiqued further by poststructuralist Jacques Derrida, who calls binaries "violent hierarchies" ("Positions" 41). I agree with Derrida in this regard, as certain couplets, such as the good/evil binary seen in the classic fairy tale, do not put forth neutral representations/meanings, but naturalized, mythic ones. Hierarchies are established through binary oppositions, which give one term power over another—the antecedent term is dependent on its opposite for meaning (Storey 100). In my opinion, Derrida's discussion of binary oppositions as "violent hierarchies" takes a similar stance to that of Barthes, who calls for making myths' histories visible. For Barthes, to analyze myth is to "track down...the ideological abuse that is hidden there" (Barthes 11), while Derrida suggests "deconstructive reading" as a means of challenging binary hierarchies and "attempts to make the not seen accessible to sight" ("Of Grammatology" 158). Both are concerned with interrogating naturalized assumptions about language, thereby shedding light on the political motivations for mythic, hierarchical representations.

In general, the classic Grimm frame presents male actors in binary terms—as heroes who save damsels in distress (Lieberman 195), or as ineffectual husbands who bow to evil wives' demands (Zipes, "Happily" 50). In addition, this representation of masculinity is also constructed through difference from femaleness, resulting in male characters' disassociation from any female stereotype or typically female role, such as child rearing. In the case of Grimm classics, the core of evil often rests with the female witch, who is the terrible mother side of the Great Mother binary. The classic frame depicts morality and identity through stark oppositions that ultimately exclude certain nuanced visions of sex and gender, while overall, the Grimm brothers' revisions indicate the editor-collectors had both "a nationalistic and romantic axe to grind" (Dundes 336-7) that "reflect[s] the bias of their philosophical and political point of view" (Zipes, "Art" 47). As the Grimms' process reveals, a text is consistently framed according to certain boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable representations—a border that helps *regulate* associations and meanings for an audience, according to particular discourses at certain historical moments.[8] Fairy tales are subject to particular 'rules of the game,' since images are communicated through binaries that appear natural or "innocent,"[9] yet are ideological, enabling one group to dominate another.

Once the fairy tale became an educating force for children rather than material for European aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, the Grimms' stories increasingly "emphasized the enforcement of a patriarchal code of *civilité*," (Zipes, "Myth" 24) often associating morality with sexual identity—good women earn this status through their work ethic, mimicking the European

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[8] See Norman Fairclough's *Analysing Discourse*, in which he refers to discourse analysis as being concerned with uncovering "the rules which govern texts" (23).

[9] David Sandner, in *The Fantastic Sublime*, says fairy tales are innocent due to their simplicity, which other stories, such as moral or didactic tales lacked (22).

bourgeois ideals of the early nineteenth century (Zipes, "Art" 53). Since fairy tales are revised products of the common peoples' oral stories, the Grimms' collection is indicative of class struggle and ideology, as the peasantry's stories were appropriated and altered according to a certain "standard way of living which was intended and came to legitimate the general bourgeois standard of living and work" (Zipes, "Art" 55). In addition, when the Grimm fairy tales were published, reading was mostly exclusive to the upper class; however, Zipes notes that members of the lower class did read these stories—learning a new skill—and also "acquiring a value system and social status [that] depend[ed] on their conformity to norms controlled by bourgeois interests" ("Art" 55). Therefore, analysis of the Grimms' stories must be historicized in order to gain a better understanding of what *was* chosen in the Grimm fairy tale frame, and what was excluded and altered in keeping with the norms and ideals of the authors and their intended audience.

How morality and gender are communicated through binaries—such as the Great Mother—is a consistent depiction in Grimm tales, but I contend that this is not due to evidence of unconscious, universal psychic desires and has more to do with the inherent revisionist nature of the fairy tale genre. In "Fairy Tales from a Folkloristic Perspective," Alan Dundes calls Grimm fairy tales a collection of "fakelore," as the brothers claim the tales are derived from a "genuine oral tradition but [the texts have] been doctored or in some cases entirely fabricated" (336). Although the Grimms wrongly suggested their collection would "present these fairy tales as pure[ly] as possible," and that in "no circumstance has [material] been added, embellished or changed" (Dundes 336), in general, moving stories from the oral realm to the literary requires combining different versions of folktales and revising them according to a time and place. Similarly, Tatar comments that "no fairy tale is sacred" (Tatar, "Off" 229), though as Zipes

states, the classic fairy stories that are most popular in the West, such as the Grimm tales, appear eternal and timeless ("Myth" 5), and are therefore treated as more sacred than relatively unknown stories (Lieberman 186).

Laura Tosi, in her discussion of rewriting fairy tales, asserts that the European literary fairy tale is intertextual—one text always relies on others for meaning. "No text exists in isolation from other texts or from social and historical contexts" (368); the fairy tale tradition is one of constant revision. The Grimms illustrate this, while contemporary renditions transform classics and draw on intertextuality, already a part of the fairy tale genre. Dundes does not mention that "composite texts" (336) such as the Grimms' tales actually take after folk tale telling, as both media are malleable and often subject to revision. Folk tales, like fairy tales, were changed according to the whims of tellers and audiences. Though orality allows dialogue between senders and receivers—audiences are able to alter and disseminate stories—one must acknowledge that literary fairy tales are also subject to revision. This allows narratives to evolve according to broad social changes and the political objectives of authors. As such, the revisionist nature of the fairy tale genre offers emancipatory potential for challenging the sacred Grimm classics and their timeless binaries.

In the case of the "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Rapunzel" classics, good and evil are associated with the male/female binary, as well as nature and civilization, and thus lump together large assumptions about gender, sexuality, morality, and sex roles. The recurring hierarchies established between morally good and depraved characters, and their association with nature and food are binaries that have a hand in constructing the greater *myth* of the Great Mother, with its naturalized assumptions about femininity. However, the meanings of such binaries are ultimately dependent on the discourse in which they are used, which, I contend,

leaves room for reinterpretation on the part of readers and editors. The mother archetype I critique throughout this thesis makes many assumptions that have a political objective—the maintenance of "man" as the dominant term in the sex binary, while also providing a narrow, black-and-white representation of women. Most explicitly, though the duality of the Great Mother archetype models itself after language, this does not mean that fairy tale representations are "frozen cultural good[s]" (Zipes, "Myth" 7)—despite Jungian literary critics' contention.

The Terrible Mother: A Jungian interpretation of the classics' villains

For all protagonists of the Grimm versions, the journey to adulthood is often challenged (Zipes, "Art" 57) by supposed surrogate mother figures who are actually evil, self-interested witches. Defying the conventions of good mothering, the stepmothers in "Snow White" and "Hansel and Gretel," and the witch in "Rapunzel" are not selfless "angel[s] of the house" (Rich 168), but conniving characters who upset traditional gender roles and challenge moral and sexual boundaries. Interestingly, the villains of the classics are also closely aligned to food and eating, as they offer food to trap unsuspecting victims, and two of them—the stepmothers in "Snow White" and "Hansel and Gretel"—have cannibalistic cravings. Contrary to the easily-tempted women of these tales, the witch/stepmother places her needs before others', defying good mothering protocol through her consumption practices—as food provider and eater. Though they often throw social norms into flux, classic villains are always thwarted; as a result, gender hierarchies and sex roles are restored. Despite their relative power over the natural world, men, and female protagonists, the evil queens and witches of the Grimm world are eventually reprimanded for their unmotherly and therefore depraved excesses and tricks.

In some respects, what Jungian theory calls the terrible mother—the evil side of the Great Mother archetype—stands in opposition to its motherly alter-ego in the Grimm versions of "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Rapunzel." On one hand, in these stories, good and evil characters are neatly divided between women who are passive, beautiful, and selfless heroines or mothers, and those who are ugly, active, and self-centred witches. However, both good and terrible mothers of the classic versions are focused on eating—so much so that their moral identity is defined according to their consumption choices. For instance, in "Snow White," the queen gladly believes she is eating her stepdaughter's organs, which helps establish the queen as a monster—she is too animalistic and morally depraved to be human. Grimm villains also consistently depend on bewitched or poisoned food to conduct their evil, again closely aligning these characters to foodways, nature, and potentially the terrible mother archetype. On the other hand, good characters often give into their food temptations, which cause conflict and the overall inability to fulfill their roles as mothers or wives. Therefore, according to the Grimm fairy tale frame, femininity is not only defined in binary terms between heroine and witch, but also in terms of women's reproductive abilities—the ability to bear and nourish children, and on the other hand, the fear of food being withheld, and life being challenged or destroyed. Though the good and terrible mother may appear dissimilar, both sides of the archetype associate women with nature—either as life-giving or destructive.

The Terrible Mother, Defined

In *The Mother: Archetypal Image in Fairy Tales*, Sybille Birkauser-Oeri focuses exclusively on depictions of the "life-giving nature mother" (127) and terrible mother in classic fairy tale texts, utilizing the Jungian concept of the Great Mother to offer psychoanalytic readings and posit that the tales have positive effects for readers' psychic health. In a similar vein

to Bettelheim's Freudian contention that fairy stories offer children the opportunity to sublimate unconscious id drives (7) and learn accepted behaviours through literary socialization (24), Birkhauser-Oeri's Jungian interpretation also considers fairy tales to have emancipatory potential, reflecting the universality of the human psyche's desires and fears: "Fairy tales, products of a number of people's imaginations, are the dreams of the whole of humanity and contain solutions to humanity's problems...not the trivial everyday sort, but the deeper concerns everyone shares" (9). The following section interprets the classic tales' supposed expression of archetypal images of the terrible mother in keeping with the Jungian concept: however, this exercise will ultimately indicate that alone, the psychoanalytic view is reductive, because it fails to consider historical events, changing social norms, and ideology which contribute to the classics' recurring depiction of woman as innate caregiver and ruthless terror.

Birkhauser-Oeri's argument that fairy tales "are not a result of conscious construction" (9) overlooks the lengthy revisionist process of fairy tale collecting, altering the stories for certain purposes, according to changing ideologies. In addition, the Jungian analysis she offers focuses exclusively on well-known fairy stories, such as the Grimms' "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Rapunzel." Although this may be due to limitations of time and space, when combined with her contention that fairy stories are unconsciously produced and collectively inspired, her exclusive focus on the classics[10] assumes there are no alternative fairy tales published that may run contrary to the Grimms' view of women. While acknowledging these shortcomings, I will employ her perspective on the three fairy tale classics to show how Jungian

[10] Birkhauser-Oeri says that the tales she discusses "are mostly from Christian countries" and are "European fairy stories"(19).

theory and the Great Mother can be used to critique fairy tales, while also offering my own interpretation of terrible mother characters.

Birkhauser-Oeri's Jungian reading of fairy tales focuses on key characteristics of the Earth Mother and her dark side, mainly that these characters live in nature, have a close relationship to animals (17), and that evil figures "generate positive female values" (28) for heroines and readers. In general, whether taking on the light or dark side of the Earth Mother (Great Mother), fairy stories often present this archetype through good fairies, old women, and witches (17). She later adds heroines to this list when she suggests Snow White's nemesis, her stepmother, is actually a symbolic reflection of her "negative shadow" (23)[11]—Snow White's unconscious dark side that helps her mature (37).[12] Mimicking nature's destruction of life in order to regenerate it (26), terrible mother figures are often cannibalistic tricksters who use poisonous food or thorns to kill their victims (27). The witch or stepmother also paralyzes protagonists, either locking them away for a period of time or causing them to leave home. This is evident in all three of the Grimms' stories, as the witches paralyze or control the main characters, relating to my earlier contention that poor mothers lack angelic selflessness but are painted as excessively self-interested. Protagonists' moments of paralysis and sometimes death at the hands of domineering witches and/or stepmothers (34) is a symbolic representation of shedding one's childhood and adolescence, and being reborn as an adult. Lastly, Birkhauser-Oeri

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[11] Another Jungian archetype, the shadow "refers on the one hand to the dark, morally inferior, or simply primitive, aspects of the psyche, on the other to positive aspects of ourselves that we are unaware of...the shadow is portrayed in dreams and in fairy stories in a character of the same sex as the hero or heroine" (Birkhauser-Oeri 23).

[12] In *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, Gilbert and Gubar also see the stepmother and Snow White as the same woman, but they describe the queen as representing the assertive self, while Snow White is the passive side (36-40).

describes terrible mothers of the fairy tale as "mistresses of the art of magic," (27) where they appear as agents from a fantasy world, despite taking on human, female forms.

The Jealous Stepmother

Birkhauser-Oeri's interpretation of the Grimms' version of "Snow White" in her book, *The Mother*, discusses the evil stepmother queen's jealousy, "self-love," (37) and her destructive desires and actions. She attributes the queen's jealousy to the mother archetype, which is already characterized by vanity and unbridled passion (32), and in turn, this leads to excessive self interest. The queen displays her jealousy when she uses her magic mirror to learn the 'truth'—her lack of beauty in comparison to that of Snow White. Birkhauser-Oeri notes that this example of the terrible mother's jealous rage is related to this figure's desire to dominate others (34), which is another indication of the queen's self-interested nature. This psychoanalytic perspective sees the mirror as a tool for the stepmother's jealousy (34). Though this text uses Jungian theory, her comment that mirrors involve "a process of reflection, of contemplation with the purpose of self-recognition, insight" (35) echoes Lacan's mirror stage concept (Ayres 42). As Brenda Ayres discusses, the queen's inability to see herself projected in the mirror (Snow White is displayed instead) suggests that she cannot find herself; her identity is not fully formed, but displaced by Snow White (43). Her recognition of "I" is relational; her identity construction is completely dependent on Snow White's image and also on male desire. While this interpretation suggests that the mirror in "Snow White" is evidence of the oppression of a patriarchal male gaze (Ayres 40), Birkhauser-Oeri maintains that the mirror fuels the queen's jealousy but that this concern with vanity is an inherent part of the archetype of which the stepmother is a part, rather than a reflection of social and historical contexts.

The queen's self love is shown through her vanity and jealousy, but is also displayed with her two-fold desire to replace her stepdaughter and eat her organs, all qualities of the terrible mother archetype. The desire for human flesh is perhaps one of the strongest signs of the terrible mother, as it evokes nature's propensity to destroy and regenerate. "Eat[ing] up her charges," (Birkhauser-Oeri 35) the queen is a site of destruction and decay, in a similar manner to the cycle of nature. Believing she has ingested Snow White, the queen attempts to erase her by incorporating her stepdaughter's body into her own. Thus she hopes she has physically and symbolically replaced her. In addition. Birkhauser-Oeri's contention that terrible mothers are destructive and bring about change is evident in "Snow White" because the queen tracks the girl down until her death, but the queen also initiates Snow White's transformation into adulthood and 'rebirth.'

The queen's last murderous trick—the poisoned apple—is referred to as a "destructive perversion of eros," (37) again reflecting the passion and love that characterize the mother archetype, but in an excessive and dark manner. Part self-interest and jealousy, the apple's mythic associations with love and Venus is perverted since this love is used to trick a daughter figure, defying mothering norms. Though she mentions the most well-known symbolism of the apple—the forbidden fruit of the Adam and Eve story—Birkhauser-Oeri does not consider how the terrible stepmother's poisonous food may be an indication of her Great Mother status, her ability to control and manipulate nature for her own ends.

Poisoned Food, Poisoned Mothering

Birkhauser-Oeri writes that "poison is used more commonly by women than by men, because it is a weapon of those who are physically weaker" (107). Such a statement is not only

stereotypical, in that it draws on biology to make large assumptions about the nature of female villainy, but Birkhauser-Oeri also does not recognize that witches' food lures are a part of the defining characteristics of the terrible mother and her relationship to the Earth. First, the queen was most successful in (momentarily) killing Snow White with her poisoned apple, rather than the toxic comb or lace. In keeping with the Jungian vision of the Great Mother, in both her light and dark aspects, female figures are related to the Earth and its regenerative processes. As such, the queen as terrible mother is most powerful when she is in her natural element—when she takes to the wilderness to hunt Snow White, and when she poisons the apple. This suggests the witch has more power over the natural world than over civilization, since in the domestic sphere, she is unable to fulfill her murderous goal. For instance, the queen's orders for Snow White's death are not followed through, as the huntsman defies her wishes and kills a pig instead. Again from the confines of the home, the queen only learns of the huntsman's trick through the all-knowing mirror, the voice of male desire, rather than using her own magical powers.

It is only when she leaves the domestic sphere and chooses to fashion a poisoned natural object that the queen's power is fully displayed. Like Snow White, her journey through the wilderness is a site of transformation, a female *bildungsroman*, since the queen's power is different at the beginning of the tale in comparison to its climax. I suggest that the queen, symbolic of the dark aspects of the Earth, is reunited with nature, and is able to harness it to replace her stepdaughter—at least momentarily. Her sorcery, a terrible mother characteristic (Birkhauser-Oeri 27), is more apparent once she casts spells in order to hide her identity and poisoned items. Within a psychoanalytic frame, the provision of poisoned food is not only a perversion of motherly love or a symbol of forbidden fruit, but also an indication of the queen's

terrible mother quality, as she is most powerful when she is able to draw on nature to fulfill her unmotherly desire to kill.

The Witchy Stepmother's Necessary Cannibalism in "Hansel and Gretel"

Birkhauser-Oeri's psychological interpretation of "Hansel and Gretel" is not as in-depth as her analysis of "Snow White;" however, she touches on a defining characteristic of the terrible mother—her tendency to imprison, which from her perspective, serves the positive purpose of allowing the hero and heroine to 'come of age.' As noted in chapter one, the stepmother and witch have been widely interpreted as the same character, as both refer to the children as "lazy bones," and the stepmother vanishes when the witch is killed (Zipes "Happily" 49). Birkhauser-Oeri suggests the witch puts on the appearance of a "nourishing nature mother," supplying the starving children with a bread house to feed on (132) when their (step)mother[13] fails in her mothering duties, abandoning them. However, the witch's motive is self-interested—because she is plumping them up to eat them. According to Birkhauser-Oeri's text, the witch's desire to feed herself and hurt (her) children relates to Mother Nature's destructive principle: "Everything she so carefully grows and nourishes...she destroys...in order to fertilize the ground, in other words to feed herself" (132). This psychological explanation sees the villain as a symbolic reincarnation of natural processes of life and death, an agent who enables protagonists to mature by being threatened—experiencing the witch's 'dark side' and overcoming it. Though the witch attempts to eat Hansel and Gretel, Birkhauser-Oeri maintains that this danger is necessary and therapeutic, an inherent part of the maturation process in the Grimm fairy tale.

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[13] As in "Snow White," the Grimms' deleted the biological mother in "Hansel and Gretel" and replaced her with the evil stepmother. The Olenberg manuscript of 1810 and the 1812 and 1815 versions of *Children's and Household Tales* include an evil mother who abandons her children (Lundell 34).

Similarly, in discussing Birkhauser-Oeri's perspective, Torborg Lundell's *Fairy Tale Mothers* maintains that the Grimms' heroines cannot seem to avoid an encounter with the terrible mother, as the tales represent characters' necessary processes of individuation (20-21; Birkhauser-Oeri 29-31). A course of development and transformation, individuation involves bringing unconscious psychic aspects into the conscious realm of thought (McCurdy 2). As described by Jole McCurdy, individuation is a "process of renewal and widening of the ego-consciousness," while Jung theorized that studying the archetypal images of fairy tales describes the individuation process (2) within the stories, but also the larger individuation of the human collective, which the stories reflect. More specifically, Birkhauser-Oeri suggests that protagonists' deaths, in the case of Snow White, or near deaths, as in "Hansel and Gretel," "[launch] the individuation process," since death or danger brings about a change in values and traits in characters and an overall increase in consciousness (30). Birkhauser-Oeri notes that Hansel and Gretel display their immaturity in falling for the terrible mother's food trap (133), but this immaturity is overcome during their entrapment, since Gretel succeeds in killing the witch and freeing Hansel from his cage. This signals that the individuation process is complete, marking a rebirth after a 'close call' with the terrible mother. The siblings are reunited with their father, and their financial woes are solved, by bringing back riches from the witch's house. Psychoanalytically, the witch in "Hansel and Gretel" provides the hero and heroine with a threat that enables them to mature and increase their social standing and power. Despite her unmotherly actions, the witch's function in breathing new life into protagonists' lives actually indicates her maternal drive (Birkhauser-Oeri 83).

Rapunzel's Imprisonment and Banishment as Journey to Maturity

Though her life is not immediately threatened like those of Hansel and Gretel, Rapunzel is also imprisoned by a witch acting as a surrogate mother. After taking the girl away from her parents, the witch shuts her up in a secluded tower when the girl reaches puberty. Moreso than the stepmother witch in "Hansel and Gretel," Rapunzel's captor is concerned with "shut[ting] her up in a tower that had neither stairs nor door" (Grimm 68) once she is twelve years old, rather than imprisoning her to devour her. Although readers do not learn the witch's motivations, she is more indicative of the smothering, overprotective, and controlling side of maternity. For instance, once the witch learns that the prince has been visiting Rapunzel, her rage indicates that she hoped Rapunzel would remain in the tower forever, and not move on to the next stage of her life with the prince. Birkhauser-Oeri cites this as another one of the key functions of the dark mother in the fairy tale—to act as a momentary obstacle in between the heroine and her prince. In Erich Neumann's *The Great Mother*, he notes that the mothering instinct to nurture and shelter children can easily turn into symbolic imprisonment if she tries to protect and control their lives too much (Lundell 20), which makes the separation between good and bad mothering rather tenuous (Birkhauser-Oeri 83). However, this is made extremely clear in the stark oppositions between good mothers and evil stepmother witches—there are few female Grimm characters that defy this black-and-white representation.

The moment of conflict between Rapunzel and the witch initiates the girl's coming of age process: her site of individuation, as she is banished into the desert after having her locks cut off. Birkhauser-Oeri interprets this as a time of transition and rebirth (90), in which Rapunzel must come to terms with "her own darkness" (94), perhaps meaning that she must experience loss and be physically lost also. In a similar fashion, the prince is forced to experience literal darkness after he jumps out of the tower and blinds himself in the fall. He too wanders aimlessly in the

wilderness until the two lovers find each other. Both partners have been imprisoned in the natural world, and have witnessed their own dark sides in the process, which makes them more self-aware and conscious (93). Interestingly, the prince does not challenge the witch (Birkhauser-Oeri 92), but she comes after him and punishes him anyway. This is perhaps a sign of the terrible mother's lethal side, as well as her propensity to protect her young from what *she* feels is most threatening.

Manipulating Food and Nature: The Witch's Bread and Butter

There are other interpretations of the classic "Hansel and Gretel" and "Rapunzel" that may be read as indicative of the terrible side of the Great Mother archetype, in that her maternal qualities appear excessive, overbearing, and self-interested—she threatens the good characters' development and is cast as a monster. Although noting that terrible mother figures often live in the wilderness and use poison, Birkhauser-Oeri tends to overlook the witches' relationship with food and nature in particular, and how this terrible power is formed through their ability to manipulate the natural world. Within a psychoanalytic frame, this is in keeping with the mother archetype, since the evil women are reincarnations of the indifferent side of Mother Earth. However, despite her motherly tendencies, this type of mother is clearly deemed monstrous and 'other' in the tales. In my view, according to Jungian theory, the witches in "Hansel and Gretel" and "Rapunzel" act as terrible mothers due to their power over the Earth, and their ability to use conventional sex roles to confuse and ensnare their victims.

Reading "Hansel and Gretel"

For instance, in "Hansel and Gretel" the Grimms present readers with an unmotherly stepmother who plots to abandon the children in order to have enough food for herself and her husband. Placing her needs before those of her young, she is immediately cast as an evil and

unfit mother—an act that appears increasingly 'natural' because she is a stepmother. Symbolically, the stepmother as witch evokes the terrible side of the Great Mother archetype in this tale due to her close relationship to food, hunger, and eating. On one side, her ability to nourish the children as a good mother should never occurs, which is symbolic of the mercurial character of the Earth: to supply bounty and at other times, to withhold food. Sending the children out into the "witch's forest" (Zipes, "Happily" 45) is equivalent to murder, as her husband believes the children will be torn to pieces by beasts (Grimm 138). The woods itself connotes the duplicitous nature of the Earth and the Great Mother archetype, as food *is* found—offering comfort and nourishment—but this food is not what it seems.

Maria Tatar notes that the enchanted forest is home to the witch—a villainous stepmother reincarnated ("Hard" 146), which has important consequences for how the woman as nature analog (Tong 238) can be interpreted in "Hansel and Gretel." While both the stepmother's and the witch's evil are made apparent by their role in supplying food, the witch is "more formidable" in the forest environment than she is in the home (Tatar, "Hard" 146). This suggests that she better controls the natural world than she does the domestic sphere, an indication that she defies the widely accepted "angel in the house" myth of good mothering (Rich 168). Crafting a sugary lure which plays into the children's hunger, the witch stands as a symbol for the Great Mother as provider and threat. The witch can thus be seen as using her powers to shape nature—the forest and food—in order to greedily feed herself. Evidently, the witch and stepmother do not conform to the self-depriving good mother ideal (Zipes, "Happily" 55) so often seen with good characters, such as biological mothers and heroes/heroines.

The villain's two homes offer another stark binary opposition that confuses children's initial associations with the domestic and public spheres, furthering the lesson that appearances

are deceiving. For instance, children generally associate home with safety and shelter, while the outside world is potentially harmful. However, the Grimms' "Hansel and Gretel" initially confuses this notion, as home is threatening and barren, and until the witch reveals her plan, the bread house offers solace and comfort. The stepmother's lack of sustenance contrasted with the witch's excessive food (Tatar "Hard" 210) associates their villainy with how they withhold and manipulate food. As such, a Jungian interpretation suggests that woman and nature cause moral and social chaos with their disguises; the witch masquerades as a typical nourishing mother figure, while food is supplied for evil gains. Similarly, in *The Witch in History*, Diane Purkiss interprets the stepmother witch as using maternity as a disguise, as she supplies the children with food, shelter, and rest (278). Eventually revealing herself to be a devourer rather than a nurturer, the witch goes beyond being simply a poor mother, as she manipulates the children to satisfy her own hunger. The stepmother is similarly 'unmotherly,' as she abandons the children in order to feed herself.

The witch is also animalistic, which adds to her terrible mother quality, as this indicates she is more a part of the natural world than of human civilization. Although she is an "old woman," she has red eyes and a heightened sense of smell, which undoubtedly, compensates for her poor vision.[14] This likely makes readers envision her as a magical monster or as an animal, since parts of her physicality are abnormal for a typical woman. In addition, her desire to eat the children also labels her as an animal or an immoral human monster. Her appearance and cannibalistic desire are strong examples of the terrible mother archetype, associating the witch with raw animalistic drives. She therefore appears as a part-human representative of nature who threatens humankind through her defiance of human and gendered conventions. Despite her

[14] The witch is unable to discern the difference between Hansel's finger and a bone that tricks her into believing he is not 'fattening up' (Grimm 142).

animalistic nature, the witch is still considered a maternal figure, since she initially provides the children with the nourishment and shelter they lack. Interestingly, she draws on mothering conventions in order to waylay her victims.

Crafting Rapunzel: The Witch's Desire to Nurture and Control

In "Rapunzel," the witch displays the terrible mother quality of having power over the natural world, of which she is a part-human embodiment. The story strongly suggests that the witch has a hand in manufacturing the girl's birth, since her parents were having difficulty conceiving a child—until the mother miraculously becomes pregnant and happens to acquire the deathly craving for rapunzel lettuce, which coincidentally grows in the witch's garden. This suggests it is the baby who needs the rapunzel (Birkhauser-Oeri 85), rather than an illustration of typical pregnancy cravings. Once the baby is hers, Gothel names the baby after her mother's craving, suggesting that the girl embodies the plant's meanings (Birhauser-Oeri 87). Birkhauser-Oeri notes that the rapunzel plant is a root vegetable that grows deep down in the earth (86), which may mean that the heroine is a nourishing earth mother, as I discuss in chapter one. However, since the witch may be seen as using her magical powers to mother Rapunzel,[15] the girl's 'deep-rootedness' may also suggest that the witch desires a child who is 'firmly planted.' Considering the witch locks Rapunzel away in a tower, the girl's rootedness is symbolic of her imprisonment, her static way of life at the hands of her captor. Rapunzel eventually makes her way down to earth again—her rooted quality may therefore symbolize her steadfastness and her desire to reunite with nature.[16] However, if one subscribes to the idea that the witch desires a

[15] The witch can be seen as a surrogate mother figure, since she provides a form of shelter for Rapunzel and gives her food. Rapunzel also calls her "godmother" throughout. The witch's desire to imprison Rapunzel is a sign of her protective motherly drive.

[16] This fits the frame of the Jungian concept of the maternal; however, if one reads critically, Rapunzel is *forced* to leave the tower and live in exile after the prince "chooses her" (Lieberman 188).

baby and engineered Rapunzel herself, her desire to keep her captive and hidden suggests the witch also wants a daughter who remains 'in one place'—ultimately controllable and passive. Interestingly, this desire is a patriarchal one, as the most ideal heroine in the classics is passive and easily controlled.[17] However in keeping with psychoanalytic theory, the terrible mother in this story therefore exemplifies the fear of overbearing mothers who symbolically keep children hostage (Birkhauser-Oeri 83). This interpretation also adheres to what Jack Zipes sees as evil nature in fairy tales: "[Villains] exploit, control, transfix, incarcerate, and destroy for their benefit... [they] abuse magic [to] prevent change..." ("When Dreams" 6). Overall, the witch embodies this terrible mother tendency of controlling nature and good characters to suit her needs.

The Witch's Stepmother Status

Rapunzel's witch can also be interpreted as a symbolic stepmother figure, since she behaves evilly like other stepmothers often seen in classic Grimm versions. For instance, similar to the stepmothers in "Snow White" and "Hansel and Gretel," she captures the protagonist, providing her with shelter, but also using her powers to manipulate food. More generally, all three stories present stepmothers as naturally evil because they do not mother 'properly', and they are not blood relatives of the children. Apparently, because she has not given birth to the protagonist, a stepmother will never be as sacrificial as a 'real' mother. As noted, the Grimms' decision to replace evil mothers with stepmothers may reflect European social conventions, or may fulfill a psychic use, as Bettelheim suggests in *The Uses of Enchantment*.[18] According to Marina Warner,

[17] For instance, Gilbert and Gubar refer to Snow White as a "marble opus" when she is frozen and objectified in death. She becomes the ultimate ideal woman in patriarchy, a woman who is controlled and passive ("Queen" 205).

[18] Bettelheim theorizes that evil stepmothers reflect children's fear of their mothers suddenly becoming witches, particularly when food or another desire is withheld (67). Stepmothers allow child readers to sublimate their hatred

the Grimms' edits reveal "[they] literally could not bear a maternal presence to be equivocal, or dangerous, and preferred to banish her altogether. For them, the bad mother had to disappear in order for the ideal to survive and allow Mother to flourish as a symbol of the eternal feminine..." (212). Although the Grimms' objectives cannot be known for certain, the recurring binary—good absent mothers and evil stepmothers—speaks to the socio-historical circumstances in which the classic tales were published and read.

An Historical Critique

As this thesis has shown, fairy tale representations *can* be analyzed in keeping with psychoanalytic theories; however, ignoring the socio-historical context suggests that these stories are somehow immaterial and static. Undeniably, there are ideological motivations to writing and editing fairy tales, so they are, at the very least, a partial reflection of historical circumstances and social norms. The widespread popularity of the Grimms' versions of these three fairy tales gives the appearance of timelessness and universality, hiding their ideological, mythic quality. However, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the tales did not necessarily accurately reflect living conditions, but they certainly indicate a patriarchal reflection of men's ideals for women and also their fears surrounding potential female power. Considering the Grimm tales form the basis of many of today's popular unrevised fairy tale *duplications* (Zipes, "Myth" 8-9)—Disney's "Snow White and the Seven Dwarves" for example—fairy tale and feminist scholarship must consider how the Grimms' classics reflect the patriarchy of its time and also ours.

Stepmothers as Innately Unnatural: An Historical View

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and fear of their real mother onto a character that should be hated (68). Further, "the child is then prevented from being devastated by experiencing her [sic] mother as evil" (Lundell 16).

The recurring stepmother-as-witch trope in the Grimm tales suggests a romanticized notion of mothering, an ideal that is essentially strengthened through the stepmother's supposedly natural rejection of good mothering standards. First, in reality, the biological mother's absence in the fairy tale relates to readers' realities, as dying during childbirth was the most common cause of death for women at the Grimms' time (Warner 213).[19] Surrogate mothers—stepmothers—were often there to raise the biological mother's children. In fact, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in France, eighty percent of widowers immediately married—within a year of the mother's death (Warner 213). This fact is repeated in the Grimms' "Snow White,"—the father "takes a second wife" a year after the mother's death (Grimm 60). Undoubtedly, classic fairy tale plots illustrate how surrogate mothers developed rivalries with their daughters for men's affections—"Snow White" is a prime example. Feminist scholars have critiqued this mother-daughter rivalry as indicative of the male gaze and of patriarchy, but also historically, when a new woman entered the house, this inevitably meant fewer resources for the children—particularly during the famine era. This is illustrated in "Hansel and Gretel," as the (step)mother convinces the father they must save themselves from starvation. Despite its stereotypical associations of evil and goodness, nonetheless, "Hansel and Gretel" also gives voice to the many periods of famine in central Europe between 1810 and 1857—the years the Grimms' collected and revised their tales (Zipes, "Happily" 49).

Though speaking to some socio-historical realities, the fairy tales still cannot be considered absolute mirrors of social realities, since stepmothers are consistently vilified while fathers' abuse, abandonment or ineffectiveness is rationalized in the patriarchal Grimm frame

[19] The Grimms were influenced by certain literary precursors to their tales, penned by authors such as Charles Perrault and Giambattista Basile (Zipes, "When Dreams" 11, 13). In turn, these stories were derived from the peasantry's oral folklore, which would also similarly reflect women's high death rates during pregnancy.

(Zipes "Happily" 50; "Great" 699). For example, in "Hansel and Gretel," the father certainly has a hand in leaving his children in the woods; however, the children return to the patriarchal home, happy to be rid of the threatening woman in their lives. It appears natural that a stepmother would not adhere to mothering convention and starve herself, as she is not related to the children, and therefore must not be wholly invested in mothering them. This makes a very large assumption that good mothers are not only sacrificial and passive, but must be blood-related. For instance, the witch in "Rapunzel" provides a fitting example of how the Grimms' stepmothers are depicted as *unnatural* because of their lack of child-bearing experience. Stepmothers' attainment of children without being pregnant is deemed unnatural and suspicious—highly wicked behaviour. Rapunzel's godmotherly witch illustrates this point, as she is able to rear a child she did not bear. Though she is not explicitly called a stepmother, the fact she provides Rapunzel with shelter and food suggests she is a controlling, overbearing surrogate mother.

Perpetuating Alienation and Division

Although the earlier versions of the Grimms' fairy tale collection displayed mothers who threatened their children, their insertion of evil stepmothers does not reflect the realities of women and families centuries ago, and neither does it now. As Marina Warner discusses, stepmothers were common in earlier centuries (213), and in contemporary times, divorce still occurs, indicating that women are leaving partnerships and potentially remarrying and becoming stepmothers. Despite the Grimm tales' prevalence and popularity, these stories do not represent women, and in actuality, alienate them from other women and themselves.

The good and terrible mothers are stark opposites, embodying wholly virtuous or supposedly sinister female qualities. With this separation, readers are not offered characters that

defy either category, a woman who is liminal or *both* an angelic mother and monstrous woman. There are also virtually no powerful and good mothers in the Grimm classics (Lundell 29). This projects the belief that morally good women must be nurturing and asexual (Lundell 55; Rich 182-184), and any form of power that is beyond the maternal realm is unnatural and therefore evil (Lundell 28). The separation between good and evil also perpetuates divisive relationships between mothers and daughters in the tales, rather than fostering cooperation: "This is in keeping with the goal of a patriarchal culture in which situations that can lead to cooperation between females, are discouraged because it is potentially threatening to the ruling patriarchal powers" (Lundell 29). The tension between mothers and daughters, displayed most prominently in "Snow White" and "Rapunzel," seems to be an unavoidable part of maturing, as "the authoritarian mother becomes the obstacle which seems to stifle natural desires for men, marriage..." (Rowe 213). A Jungian interpretation posits this as an inevitable and helpful individuation, but the rivalry that forms between daughter and mother is too much of a sexual contest for it to be deemed natural or healthy—instead indicating the emphasis placed on beauty by men (Gilbert and Gubar, "Queen" 203). The "predatory female sexuality" (Rowe 212) displayed by the bad woman—usually through her appetite—is eventually overcome and the daughter is initiated into "predestined roles of wife and mother" (Rowe 214). "The arena of the hearth and cradle" seems the only acceptable option for women, (Rowe 221) thus the heroine's supposed liberation from the villain, and her own repression of her dark tendencies appears essential. The witchy stepmother serves as a rite of passage to patriarchy, while the good/evil binary leaves little room for a nuanced vision of feminine subjectivity that readers could associate themselves with, guilt free.

Female Darkness: The Rejection of Traditional Mothering

My discussion of the classics' terrible mothers revealed a pattern of evilness that was established through the witchy stepmothers' lack of good mothering. She does not nourish children but preys on them to satisfy *her* hunger, *her* satisfactions. Food and eating therefore play a significant role in labelling these women as active, powerful, and self-interested. However, these characteristics are deemed monstrous and other, since the villains stand in the way of heroes and heroines' maturation, and evil is eventually killed or otherwise overcome. The provision, denial, and manipulation of food are ways of stressing witches' supposed abnormality. As a female character, the stepmother witch is expected to 'mother'—like and care for children selflessly. She must also adhere to certain female stereotypes, such as docility, passivity, beauty, and moral goodness (Lieberman 187-88, 192). The evil women in "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel" and "Rapunzel" defy these standards.

Torborg Lundell sees the treatment of female good and evil in the Grimms' tales as literary reflections of greater societal ideas about gender, since women's moral fibre is determined by the degree of martyr-like 'angel in the house' behaviour they display (Rich 168; Tatar 234; Lieberman 194). "Whether a mother is presented as negative or positive depends on to what degree she conforms to a socially desirable mother image of a mother who follows the rules of a patriarchal society" (Lundell 28). Thus it is difficult to accept the psychological view that fairy tales are therapeutic and timeless stories, since the Great Mother concept actually illustrates how certain authors and audiences support a narrow and stereotypical view of morality, sex roles, and power. The Great Mother is essentially perpetuating the mythic idea of classic fairy tales as universal and untouchable canons (Zipes, "Myth" 7, 15), perpetuating myths of mothering and female identity—rather than interrogating these texts critically (Zipes, "When Dreams" 82).

Predominantly, these women are cast as monstrous because of their rejection of the motherhood institution. Their degree of power over nature, female and male characters is deemed unnatural for female characters. Though it may be reassuring that women *can* be threatening and powerful in fairy tales, in the end, this badness is vanquished in order for gender and power relations to be restored. Fairy tale scholar Jack Zipes comments that in wondrous oral and literary stories, "breaking the spell equals emancipation" ("When Dreams" 6). However, what degree of freedom do characters and readers attain when classic tales emphasize that patriarchal power be restored?

Bad Women: A Force to Fear, Defeat, and Repress

Simply due to their sex, the female characters in classic fairy tales are defined as good or evil according to the degree of stereotypical maternal instincts they display. This highlights a greater essentialist view of women, one which says all females are naturally inclined to mother (Tong 193). Therefore, witches and stepmothers who circumvent typical mothering practices—turn them on their head or otherwise deny this role—are viewed as highly threatening to what Adrienne Rich calls "the sacred calling" of motherhood (Rich 43). Furthermore, "motherhood is supposed to be continuous, unconditional. Love and anger cannot coexist. Female anger threatens the institution of motherhood" (Rich 46). Evidently, the stepmother witch embodies all of the potential threatening aspects of a mother who does not conform to demanding good mother ideals. The clear delineation between good and evil in the classic tales illustrate Rich's contention that love and anger cannot coexist in a mother. Embodying all motherly villainy, the witch and her unnatural power can more easily be understood and expelled than a part-loving, part-menacing biological mother. Conveniently, the female villains' death is also more easily rationalized. Most explicitly, female villainy in the classic Grimm tale illustrates that female

power is considered naturally evil and monstrous—an unfeminine force that must be stopped or repressed.

However, mothering is in itself a source of power, as society is dependent on mothers for life, and children are essentially powerless for many years of their lives. As Adrienne Rich describes in *Of Woman Born*, "The power of the mother is...to give or withhold survival itself. Nowhere else does a woman possess such literal power over life and death" (68). Being a mother is only partly empowering however, since this also means that women tend to compensate for their overall powerlessness in society through motherhood (67), while mothering *well* means adhering to oppressive social conventions—mainly being self-sacrificing and all-loving (Rich 168; Lieberman 194). Further, failing to live up to the "sentimentalized image of the perfect mother casts a long, guilt-inducing shadow over real mothers' lives" (Thurer xi). Psychologically, the witch or stepmother may very well be mothers' or children's shadows, fictional illustrations of their anger and resentment toward the other party. However, does witnessing the terrible mother act as a cathartic outlet for real mothers, particularly when the classic tales label these actors as monstrous witches? Lundell comments that tales like "Hansel and Gretel" (and also "Snow White" and "Rapunzel," I contend) are "mechanisms to impose guilt on all normal mothers who, even if they have enough food, sometimes while raising their children may often wish they would get lost for a while" (35). Adult readers' potential guilt is also strengthened by the end of the classics' endings, in which bad women are punished. The moral is to disassociate from the evil displayed, or else.[20] As Karen Rowe explains in "Feminism and Fairy Tales," "because of their gruesome fates, odious females hardly recommend

[20] I refer to adult female readers here; however, since these classic tales are typically read at an early age, the morals and values instilled would likely affect child readers (Lieberman 185), perhaps influencing their familial and romantic relationships as an adult, as Germaine Greer discusses in *The Female Eunuch* (182-183) and Karen Rowe mentions in "Feminism and Fairy Tales" (221).

themselves as models for young readers" (218). The queen in "Snow White" is forced to dance to the death in red-hot shoes, while the witch in "Hansel and Gretel" is incinerated in her own oven.

However, should the bad woman be so easily rejected and repressed from the stories' and readers' minds? They display power through their plotting, intelligence, and creativity (Gilbert and Gubar, "Queen" 203), but these qualities are deemed unnatural in the classic fairy tale frame (Lundell 14, 28). Witches and evil stepmothers defy the heroine's passivity and docility, providing a different, even subversive, image of femininity. Their rejection of what is expected of and typical for women in fairy tales also defies the greater patriarchal ideal of self-denying angel women. Projected as sources of "disruptive non-conformity" (Rowe 218), readers reject annihilated figures, though they may speak to their desires and potentially empower them more than the classic Snow White or Rapunzel could.

On the one hand, perhaps female villainy in canonized fairy tales offers a form of subversion Jack Zipes sees as a founding characteristic of the fairy tale genre's wonder and utopian longings. Reflecting its time and place in history, fairy tales "emanate from specific struggles to humanize bestial and barbaric forces that have terrorized our minds and communities in concrete ways...the fairy tale sets out...to conquer this concrete terror through metaphors that are accessible...and provide hope that social and political conditions can be changed." ("When Dreams" 1-2). The fact that powerful women are included in these texts suggests subversion, in that villains defy conventions and provide readers with another vision of femininity, beyond the passive female. However, it is because of this very power they are labelled evil and destroyed. In the Grimm tales, that which defies stereotypical femininity is viewed as a bestial and barbaric

force that must be overcome. In their symbolic difference, evil women actually sustain and strengthen unattainable, mythic ideas about the perfect woman as daughter, wife, and mother.

Tolerating the Horror and Attraction of Female Monstrosity in Fairy Tales

Evil women in the Grimms' classics provide an alternative depiction of femininity—one that defies "suffering heroine" ideals and the "sacred calling of motherhood." By providing a potentially threatening vision of femininity, witches and stepmothers actually help define what is morally and sexually acceptable for women. Upon witnessing their difference and 'otherliness,' readers are forced to re-affirm what is considered right, wrong, and profane, and how their identity compares to that of the monster.

In *Powers of Horror*, Julia Kristeva theorizes the abject as anything that "disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (4). Through its difference, the abject threatens the stability of the status quo, and through this threat, societal boundaries and norms are questioned and re-established against the threat of collapse the abject represents. The cannibalistic witches of the Grimm tales are certainly monstrous and offer potentially subversive depictions of femaleness; however, the clear boundaries established between good and evil women in the classics limit villains' ability to push societal limits and to be considered abject figures (Fullerton, "Representing"). Stepmothers and witches are presented as wholly evil—as I have discussed, there are virtually no women who are *both* good and evil in the Grimm fairy tale frame, which would more clearly render these women as abject. The abject's ambiguity actually threatens societal order more than a completely evil monster like the witch in "Hansel and Gretel" for example. Clear delineations between binaries offer black-and-white meanings that are easily

understood. The abject as "The place where meaning collapses" (Kristeva 2), takes up the gray space between the black and the white. It is liminal, contradictory, and not a space that can be easily labelled, understood, or even fully expelled from discourse.

Kristeva envisions the abject as a potential way of understanding identity formation. In a similar vein to the differential meanings inherent in language, the abject constitutes the identity of its opposite—what is considered socially acceptable. Since it threatens the very foundations of society, the abject calls into question naturalized morals, which in turn helps solidify the status quo. What is normal is therefore constituted by what is abnormal. Moreso than forces of complete evil, the abject motivates the public to question its moral codes. For example, Barbara Creed's *The Monstrous Feminine* illustrates that particularly in the horror film genre, female monsters' threatening sexuality is both attractive and repellent—a contradiction that is fundamental to the abject. Creed sees the villain's power to horrify as established through her reproductive functions—she is a sexual being who threatens male power (3). This is often displayed through cannibalism and castration, which symbolically represents the fear of female sexual power. I also suggest that certain women of the fairy tale are abject because their appetites threaten what is natural and 'given' for women, therefore offering subversive potential. However, the abject is expelled beyond an "imaginary border between self from not-self" (Smith Fullerton). Clearly put, the abject "...is neither good nor evil, subject nor object, but something which threatens the distinctions themselves" (Fullerton, "Sexing" 8). Echoing the abjection concept, Andrew Hock-Soon Ng, in his discussion of monstrosity in contemporary texts, explains that the monster terrifies because it delivers a truth which "reveals something we deny or fear" (4). Since humanness is the yardstick for determining monstrosity, the abject can never

be gotten rid of—"it is within the self" (5). Ultimately, the abject must be tolerated, for it has a hand in constituting the very subjects it challenges.

Is the Abject Alive in the Classic Tales?

For the most part, the potentially subversive nature of the bad women in classic fairy tales is contained to such a degree that these monsters are generally not abject characters. The women who are depicted as wholly evil, without any redeeming or attractive qualities, are easily contained and expelled, for they are obviously inhuman. For instance, the animalistic and fearful depiction of the witch in "Hansel and Gretel"—her beady red eyes, "keen sense of smell like an animal" and cannibalistic desire emphasize her inhumanity. Characters that are *more* human, partly alluring, and also depraved, are far more off-putting and horrifying than characters that are completely evil and alien.

The evil queen in "Snow White" is a case in point. She may be considered abject because she is described as "beautiful, yet proud and overbearing" (Grimm 60). In addition, there is a sense that she won her royal title through her beauty, as most women do in the fairy tale (Lieberman 188). The magic mirror initially tells her that she is most beautiful in the land until Snow White matures into a sexual rival. On the other hand, she reveals her wicked, sexually threatening nature with her desire to kill her stepdaughter and eat her organs. Cannibalism is obviously rejected as animalistic and immoral, and the queen's desire immediately casts her as "other," the direct opposite to "us," the rational, ethical part of society. As beautiful, cunning, and murderous, the queen defies the classic fairy tale convention of beauty representing goodness. Further, the Grimm version (unlike the well-known Disney film) does not magically transform the queen into a hag to match her inner evil. Instead, she paints her face, which

suggests she has limited supernatural powers. Her poisoned apple may also be interpreted as a 'more human' murder weapon than outright sorcery, while she also tries to strangle Snow White with laces. Contrary to the witch in "Hansel and Gretel," who is overtly animalistic in her appearance and behaviour, Snow White's stepmother is perhaps abject, as she is beautiful, active, and deadly. Although she is labelled as a murderess who must be killed, the queen still offers a more nuanced depiction of female villainy because she appears more human—and as a result, more abject—than her witchy counterparts.

Although not all three evil women are abject characters, they all draw on feminine expectations and typical "feminine objects" to lure their unsuspecting prey. For instance, the witches in "Hansel and Gretel" and "Rapunzel" manipulate food and shelter—typically maternal gifts—to draw in good characters. As well, Gilbert and Gubar suggest in their reading of "Snow White" that the queen offers a subversive, even tongue-in-cheek depiction of 'proper' female behaviour that brings the heroine closer and closer to death. After disguising herself as an older and supposedly wiser woman, the queen offers Snow White the laces and comb to maintain her beauty, while the apple is symbolic of forbidden indulgence. By taking control of "feminine wiles" that are typically used to oppress women,[21] the queen presents the view that "conventional female arts kill" (Gilbert and Gubar, "Queen" 204), thus offering a potential critique of mainstream womanhood. However, these tricks do not kill, and if anything, bring Snow White closer to her typical fairy tale ending. At least in part, the queen's manipulation of societal standards indicate that she has the power to threaten social stability, but the classic fairy tale frame places limitations on her power so that order is restored. As feminists have noted, the

[21] The laces, comb, and apple are all associated with womanhood. The lace and comb suggest beauty upkeep, thus adhering to certain beauty standards. The apple, through its mythic symbolism, evokes the imagery of Eve. Snow White falls for this temptation like Eve does, and therefore represents women as indulgent and lacking control.

Grimms' tales became so popular and timeless because the patriarchal ideals they project still have weight in today's culture.

Abjection and the Monstrous-Feminine in Contemporary Retellings

For the most part, the contemporary feminist fairy tales I analyze in this thesis use the monstrous feminine to question social boundaries and the supposed naturalness of their classic counterparts. In actuality, using abject women in fairy tale retellings is part and parcel of a postmodern and feminist ethos. A postmodern work is characterized by a questioning of meanings and social constructions that appear natural and given. According to the postmodern credo, institutions such as family, religion, gender, sexuality, and even reality itself (Fullerton, "Sexing" 16) are not universal, timeless, or 'definable' because the meanings of these societal concepts are potentially endless. The postmodern's negotiation of meaning is similar to the challenge the abject poses to social stability. On the surface, both concepts may appear nihilistic because of their rejection of solidified social structures. However, I contend that in these contemporary retellings, the authors use abject characters and monstrous women to conduct a politically-motivated assault on the classics' assumptions.

The strongest example of the monstrous feminine in the contemporary tales chosen for analysis is Neil Gaiman's murderous and sexual Snow White character in "Snow, Glass, Apples." As I discussed in chapter one, Gaiman subverts who is good and evil, breaking down the classics' construction of beauty equalling moral decency. The queen is indeed powerful and violent in this rendition, for she banishes Snow White, poisons her and cuts out her heart. However, the queen is able to tell her own story—a form of power denied in the classics—and readers learn her actions are necessary to stop Snow White.

The heroine is depicted as angelic and pure in the Grimms' tale, drawing on the symbolism of the 'whiteness' inherent to her identity. However, Gaiman reinterprets Snow White's makeup, because her origins—the snow, blood, and black wood—actually contribute to her monstrous nature as a part-dead, sexual vampire. For instance, her whiteness is reinterpreted as deathly and inhuman; she never eats food, except for the occasional apple. Similarly, her murderous self-indulgence on the blood of her father and the forest folk suggest that she lacks any morality. This heartlessness is both literal and symbolic, since she continues to terrorize the forests despite having her heart cut out by the queen's huntsmen.[22] However, her heart continues to beat without its body, further associating Snow White with vampires and zombies. Barbara Creed notes that "the ultimate in abjection is the corpse" (9) because "it signifies one of the most basic forms of pollution—the body without a soul" (10). Symbolically, Snow White's vampirism indicates her soul-less temperament, but she is also a powerful walking corpse. She therefore horrifies because she transgresses the borders between the living and dead, the moral and profane.

Snow White is clearly terrifying in the sense of the monstrous feminine and the abject; there is both attraction and horror in her contradictory identity. As a young and beautiful princess, she gives the appearance of chastity and innocence, yet her age and royal status defy the classics' portrayal of passive heroines. As a vampire and living corpse, she indulges her hunger for blood and sex, which transgresses what is normal for heroines in classic fairy tales, and also what is considered normal and 'decent' for young girls. "It is the stereotype of feminine evil—beautiful on the outside/corrupt within—that is so popular within patriarchal discourses

[22] In Gaiman's version, the queen's huntsmen do 'kill' Snow White, bringing her heart back to the queen. She hangs the heart up in the rafters of her bedroom, and knows "it was hers—no sow's heart or doe's would have continued to beat and pulse after it had been cut out, as that one did" (519).

about woman's evil nature" (Creed 42) that allows Gaiman's Snow White to horrify as much as she does.

Most explicitly, Snow White's horrifying power is established through her maternal body—her sexuality and her reproductive functions (Creed 3, 7). The dual fascination with and fear of female sexuality (Creed 5) can be envisioned as a form of abjection, a site that appears alluring and terrifying (Creed 14). Drawing on Kristeva's *Powers of Horror*, Creed notes that female monsters of horror films are often represented through their unclean maternal bodies. Alone, a woman's body is symbolic of its "debt to nature," with its menstruation and child-bearing faculties (Kristeva 102), which ultimately, cannot be controlled or fully repressed. Shame, guilt, and embarrassment about bodily wastes is established "through the order of the phallus" (Creed 13), and the female body therefore defies what patriarchy deems clean and proper. Thus, images of blood in "Snow, Glass, Apples" symbolize menstruation and desire, as well as the girl's maturity and dominance. Her vampirism and menstrual blood[23] are likely viewed as unnatural and improper, though in actuality, the girl's bloody body *is* natural, therefore taking up human and inhuman characteristics—her menstruation projects her as maternal, but she is also a half-dead vampire. It is this threat of sexual maturity evoked in blood imagery that indicates the male fear and awe of the female body.

In addition, evil Snow White evokes the *vagina dentate* myth, horrifying through her vampirism that threatens to displace male power. As Joseph Campbell writes in *The Masks of God*, the castrating vagina is a common motif in primitive mythology and folklore (73), another indication of the monstrous-feminine's linkage to the allure and threat of female sexuality. Most

[23] There is a scene in "Snow, Glass, Apples" that suggests the girl is menstruating, for as she is feeding on a monk in the woods, "a thin blackish liquid began to dribble from between her legs..." (Gaiman 521).

explicitly, Snow White provides a clear example of her sexual power and dominance when she feeds off of her father, and given the scars on his body, the relationship is overtly incestuous: "There were scars on my love, her father's thighs, and on his bullock-pouch, and on his male member, when he died" (Gaiman 519). The girl's lust for blood knows no bounds, and if feasting on her father were not already enough, she also blatantly threatens to castrate him. In her analysis of female vampires, Creed notes that "the vampire also threatens to bite, to draw blood, and sever the penis" (70). The oral sex in Gaiman's text is a literal representation of the *vagina dentate*, but the girl's overall appetite for blood is linked to her sexual, fearful power which renders the king, queen, and numerous others "frozen by her, owned and dominated" (Gaiman 518).

Similarly, Patricia Galloway's Hansel and Gretel retelling, "The Woodcutter's Wife," projects the stepmother as witch and vampire. Although she does not mirror the classic's cannibalistic desire to eat her children, Helga lives parasitically off her children's and husband's blood, which suggests 'unmotherly' dominance. She chooses to feed herself, and in so doing, makes her family weaker in order to strengthen herself. Overtly, she is a terrible mother: hungry, greedy, self-satisfying, and lacking maternal instincts. Her vampirism, like the cannibalism trope used in the classic, similarly evokes the *vagina dentate* myth, for her eating brings about symbolic incapacitation in her husband, who is supposed to be the 'provider': "Karl could not work as vigorously as usual. No doubt this is partly why we became so desperately poor" (Galloway 109). Further, in an earlier marriage, Helga cuts off her then-husband's hand to use in concocting spells, suggesting Helga dominates the men in her life by limiting and 'castrating' their power in order to bolster her own. Although she does not overtly horrify to the degree Gaiman's Snow White does, Helga is still a monstrous character because of her hunger to attain

power at the expense of her family members. Also, in the end, the witch is not killed. The text implies she transforms into an animal or small child that can slip through the oven bars. Helga knows that if she turns into a child, and she "goes to their door with big dark eyes and a hungry look" (123), they will take her in. While the classic "Hansel and Gretel" punishes the villain, Helga is allowed to roam free in any form she chooses. This implies she is a powerful actor, for she controls her own body and those around her by masking the terrifying reality of her witchy status. In Galloway's text, as well as Gaiman's, the emphasis placed on bodily desires and women's appetites are closely linked to sexuality and power, as food and sex are potentially uncontrollable.

Overall, the vampire motif Neil Gaiman introduces in the Snow White narrative defies multiple boundaries of acceptable gendered and moral behaviour. The heroine is cast as abject—sexually deviant, aggressive, beautiful, and heartless both literally and symbolically. However, she offers a view of female power that runs contrary to the well-known classics, playing off their motifs and meanings to make the tale into a horrific adult story. The monstrous-feminine in this contemporary retelling offers readers the opportunity to confront what is considered abject—the maternal body and its sexual power. Though this encounter threatens the stability of gender stereotypes and sex roles of the classic, the abject is still expelled and jettisoned away from "us"—the ethical, good part of society. The monstrous-feminine offers subversive potential, but I note that the monstrous-feminine still relies on male fears and fantasies: "the presence of the monstrous-feminine...speaks to us more about male fears than about female desire or feminine subjectivity" (Creed 7). Though limited to maternal and sexual horror, the monstrous feminine still questions the patriarchal mainstream understanding of femaleness because it draws on these particular naturalized concepts in order to question and challenge their existence.

Female Villainy in other Contemporary Revisions: Abjection and Defamiliarization

Other feminist retellings do not display images of the monstrous-feminine; however, I contend that a couple other characters in my selected tales are abject, defying the definitions of heroism and villainy shown in the classic tales. Emma Donoghue's cottage woman may be interpreted as an abject figure because she does not 'look like' a mother, yet she is maternal and also threatening. When the siblings first meet the woman, the girls says, "When door open I think mother then no. Young" (130). In the girls' eyes, she is not a mother, yet she gives the children shelter and food, and specifically, teaches the girl how to bake—all suggesting that this character is not witchy or evil, but typically maternal. Donoghue did not remove the gingerbread house from her tale, likely because she wanted audiences to recognize the witch's house, assume a witch lives there, and then are shocked by their own assumption when the woman is maternal and strong, yet not evil. The woman's strength is shown when she locks the girl's brother up in a cage after he sexually assaults her. She puts a knife to his chin, drawing a little blood before he clambers into the cage (Donoghue 132). Donoghue's character subverts the classic's binary treatment of women—as either maternal and passive or witchy and evil. The woman defies categorization because she is both maternal—providing food and shelter—but is also strong in her convictions, and retaliates against assault through physical violence. In her abjection, this character in Donoghue's tale questions why women are defined so narrowly in the classic "Hansel and Gretel," why women must be passive and perhaps victims in order to attain good mother status.

Neil Gaiman's witchy queen, in "Snow, Glass, Apples," offers another example of abjection and also highlights how subversive abject characters are in their 'this nor that' status. As I mention in chapter one, the queen has many characteristics that appear contradictory in

classic fairy tales—she is a beautiful witch, murderer, victim, and peacekeeper. The queen cannot be clearly situated as either evil or good, she occupies both identities. By telling her own story, Gaiman illustrates that there are reasons for characters' actions, and not that stepmothering and supernatural power equals innate evil. In this retelling, the queen is not motivated by jealousy, but a sense of duty to her people—to rid the forest of her vampire stepdaughter and restore order. But the queen is also a witch; her power is displayed most prominently when she poisons the apples, which is an elaborate process of sorcery. She thus represents both ends of the morality spectrum, for her goodness is displayed in her brave decision to try and kill her stepdaughter, but her murderous desire also associates her with darkness. Gaiman's queen interrogates what is considered just action and challenges the assumption that women can only be defined as good or evil, regardless of the situation. The particular female characters penned by Gaiman and Donoghue obscure a clear-cut definition of heroism and villainy for women in the fairy tale because they fall in between these definitions and shows how there are necessary exemptions to these rules. In the case of "Snow, Glass, Apples," sometimes 'eye for an eye' is necessary, while misogyny must sometimes be dealt with through force, as displayed in Donoghue's Hansel and Gretel story.

The other contemporary tales I analyze do not include abject women, but they do transform the tales according to feminist arguments, and in keeping with a postmodern objective, question and play with sedimented meanings and predictable plotlines through once villainous or absent characters. Maria Tatar calls this defamiliarization, retold fairy tales that "challenge and resist, rather than simply reproduce, the constructs of a culture" ("Off" 236-237). By adding, removing, or changing the actions seen in the classics, these new tales build on the old by injecting current social concerns into the plotlines.

Lynne's humorous Rapunzel tale removes evil from the story almost completely, for her mother, who is originally depicted as a witch in the Grimms' version, is not monstrous, threatening, or particularly powerful or supernatural. She eventually locks her daughter Margheretina in the upper level of their home because she worries about her daughter's unnatural lack of appetite. The mother is depicted as overbearing and protective, but not a typical witch, who is potentially subversive with her threatening power over nature and other characters. By removing the villainous side of Rapunzel's mother, Lynne emphasizes the heroine's relative strength in acting independently, in not prescribing to the eating and beauty ideals of her food-centred town.

Jenny Diski's "The Vanishing Princess," another Rapunzel tale I discuss, also removes villainy from female characters, placing badness on two self-absorbed, misogynistic princes. Removing the witch from the tale allows Diski to critique how Rapunzel is rescued, while the tale also questions how the imprisonment affects the heroine's development and identity. As an undeveloped subject—her identity is completely dependent on the desires of the princes—the girl is not ever really 'there.' The moment the girl can no longer see herself in the mirror's reflection is the moment she also disappears. Diski's tale questions Rapunzel's passivity and helplessness in the tower, her complete dependence on others for knowledge. The classic naturalizes and romanticizes her rescue, as if it is common knowledge that a prince is needed for escape. Initially, one expects that the two princes in Diski's tale will fight for the princess' affections, one bringing food, the other a mirror and calendar. However, they try to 'outdo' one another in objectifying the princess in her own mirror, etching images of her body parts to such an extent that she can no longer see her reflection, causing her to vanish. The princess is an amusing tool for both men, an object to impose their views and desires on, rather than to love or

rescue. Diski is therefore critical of the classic's assumption that imprisoned princesses who wait to be rescued will be cherished. In addition, this rendition subtly suggests that the princess has a partial hand in her own imprisonment because she has not learned to be curious about the outside world. If she had been curious, she would have realized the door was unlocked. However, this princess is victimized by the two princes' greed and fantasies and is not able to break free from the identity they prescribe to her.

In Carter's Snow White retelling, "The Snow Child," evil rests with the Count, whom Carter adds as a symbolic representation and critique of the patriarchal mirror and prince in the classic version. Created and destroyed by the Count, the girl made of snow, blood, and a raven's feather is similar to Diski's princess in that her existence is defined through male eyes. As I discuss in chapter one, the Count's desire to "have a girl" who takes after natural objects is a critique of the classic's omnipresent male gaze, shown through the mother's wish for Snow White and the magic mirror. Although the classic shows the mother wanting her to baby to look a certain way, the Count suggests that this desire is not her own, but informed by men. Although the mirror is not included, the sexual rivalry the mirror instils between women is also prominent in Carter's tale, as the Countess loses her clothes to the girl. I would not classify the Count as an abject figure, for he appears wholly indecent and misogynistic—he has no redeeming or attractive qualities in Carter's short tale. However, he does succeed in horrifying readers, for he incestuously has sex with 'his girl's' dead body. Carter plays on the phrase 'have a girl,' leading audiences to believe the Count and the girl are blood-related, making the necrophilia scene also an incestuous one. This illustrates that even in death, the male gaze is still upon beautiful, dead women, which is also clearly apparent in the classic version. The prince desires Snow White and begs the dwarfs for her body, and they take pity on him (Grimm, 66). Although the prince

evidently does not have sex with Snow White's body, the male gaze is still apparent. Further, the desire for a "marble opus" (Gilbert and Gubar, "Queen" 205), a passive and imprisoned woman, is also indicative of patriarchy. Though the abject is an attractive literary technique for feminist authors to use, I contend Carter succeeds in blurring boundaries and upsetting the classics' naturalizations through the Count's immoral behaviour. Carter brings out elements already apparent in the classic—the male gaze and the patriarchal desire for weak, inactive women—in order to defamiliarize audiences to the supposed romance of the classic and refamiliarize them with the oppressive and problematic aspects of the well-known version.

Overall, the tales without monstrous-feminine characters use the abject as well as varied modes of defamiliarization to question accepted representations within the tales, while also using the tales as a vehicle for new contemporary issues, such as domestic violence and body image.

* * *

Analyzing these classic fairy tales according to a Jungian framework indicates that the terrible mother concept—woman as lethal, secretive, and 'dark'—is not a universal psychic concept brought to life in literary form. Female villainy, according to the Grimms, is often determined through witches' lack of maternal skills, which they blatantly avoid or transgress. Their food provisions, appetites, and overall power in imprisoning and instilling fear in heroes and heroines make the classic witch fearsome, but this power is eventually overcome, and patriarchal order returns to these tales, while stark boundaries between good and evil are upheld. As my close psychoanalytic readings of the classic "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Rapunzel" show, the terrible mother is often associated with reproduction and mothering, as is the good Earth mother. Whether good or evil, female characters are consistently defined

according to their sex and 'natural' child rearing role. I contend that this draws on mythic and culturally-induced ideas about woman's reproductive body rather than illustrating a psychic truth about womanhood.

Further, the terrible mother in certain classic and contemporary texts is closely aligned with the monstrous feminine. Though Creed's theory is feminist in orientation, rather than Jungian, the terrible mother and monstrous feminine both horrify through their 'unmotherly' sexuality. In the classics, this is covertly shown through cannibalistic cravings, whereas contemporary horror tales overtly display women as sexual predators. Together, the good mother and terrible mother represent the ambiguities of the abject if combined in the same character. As discussed, overtly combining the demonic and virtuous into one character is rarely seen in classic fairy tales. However, some of the contemporary tales offer this abject vision. These postmodern retellings offer a more nuanced representation of heroines and witches, for these characters defy the narrow definitions of good and evil women seen in the Grimms' tales. As abject—monstrous, sexual, beautiful, and also partly maternal—feminists' characters cannot be as easily categorized as heroine or witch, upsetting how women are typically projected in the Grimms' tales, and also offering a broader vision of female power.

However, feminist writers' challenge to the classics also highlights a paradox of postmodern literary technique. For in using well-known fairy tales as the vehicle for their feminist messages, revisionist texts cannot break free of the stereotypical classics completely, since they refer back to their plotlines and characters—relying on them—to critique these stories' and greater society's constructions. Virtually all of the contemporary texts frame women's subversiveness through their sexuality and maternal drives, as the authors draw on the classics' 'nature as woman' symbolism.

Conclusion: Revisiting the Maternal Appetite

This thesis was initially informed by my observation that classic fairy tales often associate women with food and eating—whether offering or withholding fare, or threatening to consume innocent children—women's good or evil status depends on the nature of their appetite and traditional maternal skills. By analyzing the "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Rapunzel" stories, I contend that this representation is unnatural and ideological, though the mystique of the Grimms' tales and that of good mothering falsely suggest that the good mothers, stepmothers, and witches of these stories offer universal representations of womanhood. This view has been espoused by certain Jungian fairy tale analysts, suggesting that fairy tales hold "the purest and simplest expression of the collective unconscious" (von Franz 1), which are revealed through analysis of stories' archetypal images. The clear-cut binaries between good and evil women, as well as their association with nature and maternity gives the appearance that the Great Mother archetype is alive and well in popular fairy tales.

However, I emphasize that these classics are subject to a revision process akin to the fairy tale and folktale genre, and that there are socio-historical reasons for this narrow depiction of women as nurturers or witches. Suggesting literature is not culturally-mediated—that fairy tales "emerg[e] spontaneously" (Birkhauser-Oeri 10)—illogically assumes that these texts are immaterial, static, and not part of a production process which inherently creates works for particular reasons. The dissimilarity between the Grimms' tales and those of contemporary feminists illustrates this point, as one espouses bourgeois civility and patriarchal stereotypes, and later revisionist tales have critiqued this tradition, altering the stories for their own feminist views. Through horror and parody, the contemporary fairy tales I discuss question the binary understanding of womanhood that the Great Mother archetype embodies.

The good women of the classic fairy tale are consistently drawn to forbidden food, as Snow White and Rapunzel's mother show most strongly. Their uncontrollable hunger and selfish indulgence in the apple and rapunzel cause upheaval and the inability to fulfill 'typical' feminine roles in the fairy tale. For instance, Snow White dies temporarily and Rapunzel's mother loses the chance to mother her own child. Hansel and Gretel are similarly punished for their indulgence in the witch's sugary bread house; however, the children's irrepressible hunger is less indulgent than essential, as they live in poverty. Snow White's mother also dies after giving birth to Snow White—a fairly regular occurrence historically—but symbolically, the good mother's desire for a baby who resembles nature also appears selfish, an 'unmotherly,' vain indulgence which must be punished. Food and eating are transgressive behaviours for otherwise good characters, whose self-indulgence does not prescribe to the definition of good mothering—self-denying and asexual (Rich 182-184; Tong 183). The good yet hungry mothers thus suffer for their moment of waning maternity, becoming absent parents or imprisoned princesses. This may symbolize both the nourishing and threatening aspect of the Great Mother, but may also reveal patriarchal notions about female sexuality—the woman who is not in control of her bodily urges and lacks maternal instincts may also threaten male dominance. The Grimms' removal of evil mothers and the insertion of evil stepmothers indicate this desire to uphold a romanticized vision of biological maternal goodness. In reality, when the Grimms' tales were written, stepmothers were a common presence in households, and such a depiction may indicate that the brothers were weary of mother figures who defied nature, who obtained other women's children without giving birth themselves.

Beyond the Grimms' revision process, there are historical facts that the tales likely express, such as times of famine and high mortality rates among pregnant women. Maria Tatar

notes that some tales' emphasis on food and orality is likely due to real food shortages throughout Europe during the Grimms' time, but sustenance was also a common concern for the peasantry, who often created folktales centred on magical food and binge eating (Tatar "Off" 205-206). However, as the folktales were appropriated, and the stories were told to child audiences, civility and morality became increasingly important, and food and eating became more controlled in the tales. Fare and appetite became motifs for instilling certain values, such as self-control and self-denial, while food was also a vehicle for obtaining or denying power (Tatar "Off" 208). Despite their fantastic elements, fairy tales are grounded in material conditions, expressing the hopes, fears, and histories of a certain time and place. At the same time, I also contend that the relationship women have with food, and also their appetites, cannot be fully explained through history alone, for ideology has had a hand in defining the classic fairy tale woman as good or terrible.

On the flipside of the Great Mother binary, the terrible mother is cast as wholly monstrous through her self-indulgences, cannibalism, and inclination to imprison heroes and heroines. The classic renditions offer powerful and potentially subversive villain, for they threaten the status quo—mainly the heroine's ability to mature and fulfill her womanly duties as wife and mother. Though diametrically opposed to the heroine and good mother, the witch's identity is established through food and appetite—though she uses these for her own lethal ends. There are numerous examples of potential terrible mothers in the classics, as, the witches in "Snow White" and "Hansel and Gretel" want to devour their children, and all of the villains display their power through the manipulation of nature, other women, and men. However, this subversion is eventually thwarted, and the changes the witch brings about are corrected, and the status quo is re-established.

The revisions contemporary feminist authors make to the Grimms' tales both draw on and question the Great Mother binary through female monstrosity, parody, and the deletion, addition, or inversion of good and evil characters—"defamiliarizing" readers from the magic spell of the classics (Tatar "Off" 237). The tales penned by Gaiman, Carter, Lynne, Diski, Galloway, and Donoghue also use appetite and/or foodways as a means of revising the classics' well-known plots—but for feminist ends. The poisoned apple remains in Gaiman's Snow White horror story, while Lynne's Rapunzel parodies the classic's emphasis on women's uncontrollable food cravings to the point of hyperbole. Both Galloway and Donoghue's "Hansel and Gretel" stories are oriented around the bread house, while Diski's Rapunzel rendition displays a puppet-like princess who only learns of hunger and eating once a prince introduces her to food. Appetite is a central aspect of the more horrific texts, as Snow White is made into a part-human, lusty child vampire in Gaiman's text, while Galloway's witch feeds off her family. Both invoke the myth of the powerful sexual woman who symbolically threatens to castrate men. Overall, contemporary authors choose to victimize heroines, empower them as abject monstrous women, or give villainous witches the chance to tell their own stories. Despite their various and at times dissimilar literary revisions, all of these authors critique the well-known classics' assumptions and their narrow view of female identity as innately maternal.

These contemporary feminist fairy tales urge readers to envision different heroines and witches, perhaps ones that conflate the good/evil binary of the Great Mother, as the abject monstrous-feminine does. Though the meaning of womanhood is expanded beyond the narrow definition offered by the Grimms' tales, these 'retakes' on the classics must still subscribe to these very definitions in order to make their critiques known and recognized by contemporary audiences. This makes the Grimms' classics all the more important to study and critique, for

their presence is still known in duplications (Zipes, "Myth" 8) and also in texts which oppose and attempt to subvert and problematize their messages and values. Since these retellings take issue with the stereotypical linkage of women with nourishment, food, appetite, and sex roles, they cannot break free from these motifs completely. The monstrous-feminine horrifies through her maternal body, while other retellings focus on heroines' and witches' eating patterns, and also more overtly display their sexual activities. Therefore, the feminist, postmodern literary techniques used in this selection of retold fairy tales cannot be described as wholly subversive because they remain indebted to the problematic classics' meanings that they critique.

Due to their intertextuality—their borrowing and refashioning of classic tales—the contemporary fairy stories I analyzed cannot be said to completely disassociate their female heroines and witches from the good/evil binary of the Great Mother archetype, particularly since mothering, reproduction, and threatening sexuality are prominent themes in revised versions. However, I suggest that this focus on typically female attributes and roles is necessary, if one is to begin critiquing these naturalized motifs at the source. These texts must find liberation within structure, offering glimpses of horrific, humorous, and thought-provoking women who challenge the timeless stories' boundaries, chipping away at the classics' frame from within the genre itself.

In the future, a more lengthy study may expand on my research findings and theories about the representation of women, food, and nature in fairy tales. I chose to analyze a cross-section of contemporary "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," and "Rapunzel" tales in order to provide a varied analysis of feminist fairy tale strategies, and a varied depiction of the treatment of women and appetite. However, I found that the texts with more horror elements could be more readily critiqued according to abjection theory and the monstrous-feminine than stories falling

within the humour genre, for example. The abject is a fitting concept for this thesis, since it defies the very boundaries that structure the classic Grimm tales, as well as the Great Mother archetype's binary treatment of women. Future research may wish to focus exclusively on the monstrous feminine in fairy tales, perhaps tracing how her power may have changed in orientation over time, or according to certain authors.

Although the other feminist works by Diski and Lynne, are successful in playing with the classics' supposed timelessness, the unsettling nature of the abject and monstrous-feminine offer an ambiguous middle-ground that is perhaps the hardest to accept, and therefore the most subversive and challenging for readers and society in general. This is not to say that immoral actions should be accepted and implemented, but the threat the monstrous-feminine and the abject pose—their symbolic power—may push audiences toward an expanded vision of what 'woman' means in the fairy tale and beyond.

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